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EVIDENCES
OF
CHRISTIANITY:
OR
A COLLECTION OF REMARKS
INTENDED
TO DISPLAY THE EXCELLENCE,
RECOMMEND THE PURITY,
ILLUSTRATE THE CHARACTER,
AND
EVINCE THE AUTHENTICITY,
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B.A.
LATE FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

K

None of the wicked shall understand;
But the wise shall understand. *Daniel xii. 10.*

Τοις κακοῖς ἀκολουθητικῶς οὐ, ματαιῶς ἀρυσταὶ καὶ ἀνεφελεῖς
ἐπειδὴ το τέλος ἐστὶν, ἡ γνῶσις, ἀλλὰ πράξις. *ARISTOTLE.*

quantum vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
Ergo non hiemes illam, non flabra, neque imbres
Convellunt: immota manet. *VIRGIL.*

THE SECOND EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED.

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CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY GILBERT WAKESFIELD, B.A.
LATE FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None of the wicked shall understand;
But the wise shall understand. Isaiah 55: 10.
The nations are astonished at his wisdom, and his power, and his glory.
He has made his way known in the world, and his path in the sea.
He has made his way known in the world, and his path in the sea.
He has made his way known in the world, and his path in the sea.
He has made his way known in the world, and his path in the sea.

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LONDON:
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TO
THOMAS NORTHMORE, Esq.

OF
 UPPER SEYMOUR-STREET.

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH the formality of a Dedication may seem but ill-suited to the sincerity and intimacy of our friendship, I could not deny myself the gratification of this public declaration of my affection and esteem.

From the contemplation of that *political* delusion, produced by calumny and corruption on timidity and weakness; a delusion, which has seduced *Englishmen* into associations against their own liberties and happiness;—and from that *religious* infatuation, which confines the privileges and comforts of society to the figments of knavery and ignorance; I turn myself for relief to a congenial mind, deeply affected with the infelicities of our times and country. Ever unreserved in my speculations, and the profession of them, I think it much to my ho-

nour, amidst such degeneracy of manners and failure of resolution, to number among my friends a chosen few, the votaries of Integrity and Truth; not more distinguished by rectitude of sentiment and the gifts of intellect, than by every personal accomplishment and every social virtue. Whether *we* shall see a rectification of our constitution, and live to rejoice over the meliorated condition of the multitudes of our countrymen in rags and beggary, in misery and vice, (such is the solicitude of our glorious government for *their* welfare!) it is impossible to pronounce: so gradual is the process of Providence in the reformation of the world! so long and severe may be the intermediate chastisement of this nation for its unparalleled enormities! No effort, however, of benevolence for the general good will be thrown away: and, under every variation of events, it will continue the duty of individuals, as it will constitute their final triumph, to live above the corruptions of the age, to plead the cause of wretchedness and poverty, to beat down the pride of
their

their oppressors, to meet with composure scoffs and insults, disabilities and embarrassments, as fellow-sufferers with the best and wisest of our species, and among the rest, with that *great reformer*, the SAVIOUR of the world himself, persecuted even to crucifixion by the corrupt *ecclesiastics* and abandoned *statesmen* of his day. The disproportion of our numbers shall not divert us from a dauntless profession of our principles and a vigorous perseverance in the work of reformation. When the oracle directed the *Athenians* to find out that *single* person, who opposed the public sentiment, *Phocion* nobly declared himself to be the man. "I am dissatisfied, says he, with ALL . . . " that ye have *done* and *said*."

At present the political horizon is dark and lowering; and *Europe* seems to be precipitating into the very sink of slavery. The spirit of subjects is not less abject than the insolence of their rulers is domineering: but the prospect may brighten speedily; and *distress* at least disabuse our countrymen into a demand for those temperate reforms,

forms, by which no peace will be endangered, no revolution and it's evils be rendered necessary; evils, which the present measures of administration have undeniably a most obvious tendency to produce. Of all possible calamities WAR is the most repugnant to the feelings of the *Christian* and the *philosopher*: and who shall calculate that immensity of guilt, which wantonly calls forth thousands and tens of thousands to plunge their swords in the bosoms of their fellow-creatures, and desolates the creation of the Almighty, the God of *Peace* and *Mercy*, the *Father* of *Mankind*, with torrents of human blood? If the rulers of the earth were suffered to quench their rage in person by this sanguinary process; the maxim of the pacific *Jesus* might receive it's efficacy, to the benefit of our species, to the redemption of innumerable victims more meritorious than their sacrificers: "*They that take up the sword, SHALL PERISH BY THE SWORD.*" The purport of *his* mission, and the design of the *divine administration*, however dilatory the execution of it's schemes

schemes to our inadequate comprehension; is the *HAPPINESS* of *man*: but that *happiness* can only result from *VIRTUE*; and *virtue* is inseparable from *CIVIL LIBERTY*: a noble truth! gloriously asserted by the father of poetry and the morning-star of *heathen literature*:

Ἡμῶν γὰρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποκινύται εὐρυοπα Ζεὺς
 Ἀνθρώποις, ὅτε μιν κατὰ δακτύλου ἡμᾶρ ἐλθῶν.

*Jove fixt it certain, that the fatal day,
 Which makes men slaves, takes half their worth
 away.*

Our wish, therefore, for that *equality* of *government*, in which the *civil rights* and *legal protection* of rich and poor, base and noble, shall be indiscriminate, (a position laid down as indisputably true by the great political writers of antiquity, and only questioned by the audacity of modern ignorance) our wish, I say, for the undistinguished protection of law, is *rational*, *benevolent*, and *virtuous*; and every attempt to promote these principles, consistently with the *general happiness*, and, if possible, with *peace*, is a *real*

real co-operation with the designs of Providence, the truest exemplification of the *Christian* doctrine, and the most perfect obedience to the will of God.

I remain, Dear Sir,

with the sincerest respect,

your affectionate friend

THE AUTHOR.

Hackney, June 13, 1793.

P R E F A C E.

I SHALL only detain the reader at his entrance on the following work, whilst I inform him, that he will find a considerable addition of *new* materials, and the *old*, I hope, much improved. Should the present attempt in behalf of religion be favourably received by the public, I shall take an early opportunity, if possible, of submitting to their notice a course of similar *Remarks*, tending to authenticate, illustrate, and explain the *Jewish Scriptures* also. In the mean time, as the following observations respect chiefly the *internal Evidences* of *Christianity*, I beg leave to premise, that by this expression I wish the reader to understand, “ a *Proof* of the *Divinity* of the “ *Christian* religion, derived from the *circumstances* of that religion itself; whether “ collected from it’s *history*, or inferred from “ it’s *condition* and *effects*.”

I have thought proper to subjoin the following precautions from *Spencer* on *Prodigies*, to engage the candid attention of the reader,

“ In

“ In matters of a moral nature, argu-
 “ ments, which appear before the mind in
 “ a high degree of probability, are sufficient
 “ rules of faith and practice. In all matters
 “ we are to consider, not what arguments
 “ we would require, but what the subject
 “ will bear. For neither religion nor rea-
 “ son require men to believe more strongly
 “ than the premises conclude, or to look
 “ for premises of greater strength than the
 “ condition of the subject will admit. Too
 “ great a facility in taking up insufficient
 “ proofs in some, and too great a rigour in
 “ exacting them beyond the capacity of
 “ the matter in others, have been of equal
 “ prejudice to truth. It is therefore a justice
 “ the reader owes the argument and him-
 “ self, not to expect *clear demonstration*, but
 “ *high probabilities* therein: a title, which
 “ I am not without some hope, that the rea-
 “ sons, hereafter alledged, may deserve.”

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IF the Reader should find any thing in the following pages, that tends to confirm his opinion of the Truth and Excellence of Christianity, his obligations are due to the Rev. THOMAS WAKEFIELD of Richmond in Surry, at whose instigation these Remarks were put together, and to whom they are cordially inscribed by his

Affectionate Brother

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is a *heathen* maxim of antiquity, that a *great book is a great evil*: and the wisest of the Kings of *Israel* has observed with no less justice, that of *making many books there is no end*. The benefit and convenience of an Author and the Public would be equally consulted, if the spirit of these aphorisms were punctually regarded in all literary undertakings.

Should the sense and learning of an age be estimated by the number of it's writings, the generation, in which we live, might assert a higher rank on the scale of letters than the most accomplished periods of ancient time: the Genius of *Athens* and *Rome* themselves would bow down before us. But, on the other hand, if *intrinsic*

excellence and novelty of information must decide the claim of literary merit, we should find ourselves, I firmly believe, degraded to a much lower point than our pride would previously suffer us to imagine. For my own part, it is my wish and intention, neither to misemploy my own time, nor to abuse the patience and leisure of my reader, by retailing the fruits of another's labour and ingenuity; and, accordingly, the following *Remarks* corroborative and illustrative of *Christianity*, will be found, to the best of my knowledge, either entirely *new*, or, where the subject has been already treated by my predecessors in this province, as *concise* as possible*. By such a procedure, we should act a more honourable part to them, who have gone before us; more uprightly to ourselves, and more respectfully to the community at large: and, what is of principal importance, we should more effectually contribute also to the advancement of solid learning and our own fame as useful and honest writers†.

* I approve the sentiment of *Ulysses* in *Homer*:

ἔχθρος δὲ μοι ἔβρι

Αἰὲς ἀριζήλων ἀγέμενα μυθολογέουσιν.

† Εὐρυπύλοιο δ' ἐξ ἡμερῶν σοφῶν,

Τὸ τε πᾶλαι το τε νῦν ὕδα γὰρ ἴσμεν

Ἀεθίων ὅτι πῦλας εἴαυρον. *Bacchylides* apud *Clem. Al.*

REMARK

REMARK I.

No contemptible presumption in favour of a revelation similarly circumstanced with Christianity, resembling it, I mean, in the genius of it's precepts, the mode of it's communication, and the character of it's great *Apostle**; arises, in my judgement, from a consideration of those remarkable declarations of the god-like *Socrates* in the well-known *Dialogue* of *Plato*†. After that extraordinary person had represented to his pupil *Alcibiades* the danger and temerity of offering sacrifices and supplications to the Gods for things apparently beneficial, but possibly fatal in the issue to our happiness and virtue from the uncertainty of future events; and had given the preference to those prayers, which resign the conduct of the universe and of individuals to the absolute will of Providence; he adds: "In my opinion it is better to abstain altogether from prayer and sacrifice; and to wait for information, how we ought to be affected towards God and men. But

* *Christ Jesus the APOSTLE and high-priest of our confession*, says the sublime author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, c. iii. v. i.

† The *Alcibiades Secundus*.

“ when, said *Alcibiades*, will this information
 “ come; and who will be our instructor? for the
 “ sight of this person would give me the most
 “ lively satisfaction. He it is, replied *Socrates*,
 “ who is solicitous for thy welfare. I am ready,
 “ says *Alcibiades*, to comply with all the injunc-
 “ tions of this man, whoever he may be, if I can
 “ but grow better by this compliance. And assure
 “ yourself, rejoined *Socrates*, that he also has a
 “ wonderful eagerness in your behalf*.”

Whether something like that report, traditional as it should seem, which afterwards prevailed so generally throughout the *East* †, and which I am inclined myself to carry up to a more venerable origin than *random fancy* or *philosophical speculation* (feeling as I do no impulse from inclination, no authority from learning, no encouragement from antiquity, no arguments from reason, for the exclusion of the Deity from occasional communication with his creatures in former periods): whether, I say, such a rumour had

* This was the period of that *mighty famine*, when mankind began to be in want, Luke xv. 14. when reflecting minds began to see the necessity of some extraordinary interference to rectify the dark and depraved condition of the world.

† See *Suetonius* in *Vespasian*, iv. 8. and the commentators on the place: edit. *Pitisci*.

reached

reached the ears of *Socrates*, or his pure and penetrating mind, contrasting the blindness and corruption of the world with the benignity and wisdom of a cœlestial superintendant of the universe, had conducted him to this conclusion; upon either supposition, the opinion of so competent a witness upon the condition of human affairs must be allowed, I think, by every impartial judge, of no inconsiderable moment, and infinitely more worthy of attention than the bold positions of modern *deists*, either with affections depraved by vicious practices, with minds distorted by obliquity of purpose, or with understandings puffed up by imaginary science. I must beg leave at least for myself to demur at any opinion on these subjects, which does not come recommended to me by the united qualities of upright *intellect*, steady *virtue*, and solid *learning*.

As nothing, that can contribute to the furtherance of the *gospel*, or the promotion of scriptural knowledge, appears to me impertinent to the present subject, I shall make no apology for submitting to the consideration of the judicious reader, whether a most difficult passage in the *epistle to the Romans* * does not admit of explanation

* Chap. viii. ver. 26.

from the ideas arising out of the present disquisitions on the sentiments of Socrates.

And in like manner also the spirit (the power and precepts of the gospel) assisteth (conspires in assisting) our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but this very spirit intercedeth for us with secret groans: that is, groans not uttered, in opposition to the importunate and audible utterances of our anxious hearts.

Indeed the whole chapter, which appears at first involved in great obscurity, may probably receive much illumination from these suggestions.

REMARK II.

I PROCEED to a *Remark*, not decisive perhaps, but of no inconsiderable tendency and of extensive application.

If the books of the *New Testament* be the production of imposture, the forgers of them were Jews: in other words, these writings can scarcely have been invented by any man, or set of men, of any other nation whatsoever.—Now this observation brings the question at least into a narrower compass, and contracts the ground upon which

our

our sceptical antagonist must take his stand for his encounter with the advocate of Christianity.

For to supersede the mention of the extreme difficulty, or rather the impossibility, if we would state the point with impartiality and precision, of personating, without a liability to the grossest errors, a character connected with the mention of celebrated men, times, places, customs, manners, and other specific circumstances without number; not, I say, to insist on these peculiarities, I make no scruple to maintain, that every reader, conversant with the writers of antiquity, and endowed with the least critical perception of stile and phraseology, must acknowledge at once the mode of composition in the New Testament to wear a complexion essentially distinct from that of all other writings whatsoever, except those of Jews, and such as have been modelled by the same standard. No competent judge, I am persuaded, will venture to controvert this position*.

* Non difficile foret homini studioso, qui quidem in Judeorum linguâ et scriptis aliquam diu versatus fuerit, Novum Testamentum de versu ferè in verum, in linguam Talmudicam transfundere; adeo à vulgari eorum et communi loquendi ratione nusquam et nunquam discedit. Lightfoot præf. in adum vol. Opp. edit. Roterodam.

H. Charnock The religious sentiments of the Hebrews were confessedly very different from those of any other ancient nation: their religious institutions were the daily employment of their lives to a scrupulous exactness, and the study of their religious writings was made the perpetual engagement and obligation of particular sects among them. The entire community might be stiled indeed a nation of priests. Thus the whole current of their ideas became tinged of course with an infusion of religious images; and the colour imbibed from this source became incorporated with the whole texture of their public and private life; with their actions, their writings, their sentiments, and their conversation. Their stile of composition, therefore, and their cast of thought, are peculiarly their own; that is, characteristic of the people, and essentially distinguished from any nationally Greek or Roman author that can be mentioned.

But the pertinency and force of this general remark will be best understood by a particular illustration of it. None but a Jew, for example, (to assume the fact as it is recorded) would have conceived such a relation as the following in similar terms*.

* Another illustration of this topic may be seen in my observations on the words *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*, Matt. xiv. 2. in my commentary on that Gospel.

Now

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an ANGEL went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*

The pool, bath, or spring, here spoken of, I suppose to have been like some of those mentioned by Herodotus and Pliny, to whom I refer the reader†; such indeed as travellers of our own times often mention. That warmth and occasional fluctuation, from some secret and unknown cause, for which a Greek or Roman historian would have attempted to account in conformity to the philosophical principles of his own peculiar system‡; a Jew, who was accustomed to ascribe all events to the immediate agency of his King Jehovah, naturally attributes to the operation of a

* John v. 2—5.

† Herod. iv. 181. Plin. Nat. Hist. ii. 97, 109. xxxi. 1, 4. See also Pausanias, iv. 35. edit. Kuhnii, and the notes there,

‡ See the Scholiast on Apoll. Rhod. iii. 225. Lucret. vi.

ministering ANGEL: a mode of solution, which would not readily have occurred but to a disciple of the law of Moses *.—And let me add, this idea,

* The heathens also, it must be confessed, occasionally ascribed very extraordinary and unexpected events to the interference of the Gods, but less uniformly in general, and through the mediation of other Gods. Διαδεδουκοντο γαρ τοις παυχοις παυχοι, ὑπ' ἐντεχνης καὶ ΘΕΩΝ πολλων, ἢ τεχνης. *Arcturius* ii. 1. init. Individual heathens, in proportion to their sanctity of character and their reverence for the Supreme Being, approximated to the rigour of the Jewish ideas on this subject. *Eustathius*, in his commentary on the first verse of the *Iliad*, says: Ὅπως δὲ, ἡ ποιησις καὶ το παρῆλλαγμα, καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἑλπίται καὶ τερατιον, ἡ καὶ τερατωδης, οἱς τὸ θεοὶ γὰρ καὶ οἱς θεοὶ ἀποκαθίσταται.

The incomparable *Hippocrates*, p. 293. edit. Fœs. has expressed himself in words truly evangelical: Ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλων θεῶν τὰ πάντα τὰ παθὲν θεῶν ἐμῶν, καὶ τὰλλα πάντα καὶ ἄλλων ἰτρον ἰτρον, οὐδ' ἀνθρωπίνων, ἀλλὰ πάντα θεῶν.

Cornelius Nepos says of *Timoleon*, sect. 4. *Nihil rerum humanarum sine DEORUM numine agi putabat.*

But on this subject I know nothing comparable to some verses of *Oppian*, *halicut*. ii. 3. to which every reader of sublimity and beauty, who has not remarked them before, will thank me for directing his attention.

τα δὲ πῶς τὴν ἐπιχθονίαν ἀκάρτα
 Ἀθανάτων στήνη· τί γὰρ μισσησὶν αὐτοὶ
 Νεκρὶ ΘΕΩΝ; εἰ δ' ὅσοι ὑπ' ἐν τοῦτο ἔχουσιν αἰσῶν,
 Οὐδ' ὅσοι ἀμπίταται βλεφάρων περιφαία νύκτα.
 ΑΛΛ' αὐτοὶ κρατεροὶ καὶ ἰσχυροὶ ἔχαστα,
 Τηλοδὲν ἔγγυς εἰσσι.

of the particular interference of the Deity by his angels, seems to have been more than usually predominant in those times, which approximate to the æra, in which we believe the apostles to have lived and written. What the original history, in it's account of those animals, which accompanied Noah in the ark, relates in the following simple language,—*Two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive**;—the Chaldee paraphrases of Jonathan and Jerusalem dignify with this observable addition: *Two of each shall go in unto thee BY THE HAND OF AN ANGEL, who will take them, and make them go in unto thee to keep them alive.* And more examples of this form of speech might be easily produced from the same paraphrasts†.

Nonnus, who is referred by Chronologers to the fifth century, and who executed a paraphrase of St. John's gospel in Greek hexameters, has given such a representation of this transaction, as might naturally be expected from one desirous to throw

* Gen. vi. 20.

† John xii. 28, 29. *Then a voice came from heaven; I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. Upon which the multitude standing by, that heard it, said, It thundered. Others said: AN ANGEL hath spoken to him.* As in c. i. v. 52. of the same evangelist, the frequent communications of divine power to our Lord during his ministry, is represented under the strongly emblematical language of ANGELS ASCENDING AND DESCENDING TO THE SON OF MAN.

a classic

a *classic* air over his performance, and to maintain a consistency with *their* modes of thinking, whose language he adopted. "A pool," says he, "where the feverish person, seeing the water bubble up with SPONTANEOUS MOTION, washed away his distemper in the warm stream *."

* Ευφρονης ασταμινθε, οπη κινωμενη απη
 Αλμασιν αυτοματοισιν ιδων ορχουμενος ιδωρ,
 Οπποτε κυμαινοντι δεμας φαιδρον λοστρω,
 Θερμα πεκαινοματης απιστοις ατο κυματα (Ι. λυματα) ησθ,
 Θιεταρον ιστηρθε ιδων οδυνηφατοι ιδωρ.

A superstitious adherence to the letter of the original, which had no conception of looking out for an easy and rational solution of this apparent inconsistency of the two accounts, in the *peculiarities* of sentiment or the *idioms* of language, produced the following remark of an annotator on the passage: "Paulo post vocat, ευφρονης ιδωρ. Sed quomodo sua sponte, siquidem, ut ait Johannes, ANGELUS descendebat et movebat aquam? Crediderim Nonnum ALIA EXEMPLA prae manibus habuisse, quæ nullam facerent Angeli mentionem; vel (a ray of reason beginning to steal across his understanding) "aquam ευφρονης appellat, quod invisibili quâdam virtute non humanis artibus moveretur." In which he has my approbation and concurrence, as coinciding with the conceptions of his author.

The account, which Prudentius gives of this pool, may with propriety be subjoined:

Morborum medicina latet, quem SPIRITUS horis
 Eruclat variis, fusum RATIONE LATENTI.

And

And who can deny the reasonableness and credibility of the circumstance as exhibited in *this* relation? Nor, I apprehend, would our *Evangelist*, had he not been educated in *Jewish* principles, have propounded, with the same fact before him, a narrative materially different from that of his poetical expositor, divested only of his embellishments. The assertion, that—*Whosoever first stept in after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had*—goes no further, in my opinion, than a mere declaration of the *reputed* efficacy of that mineral spring, for the strict truth of which our history is by no means responsible: and *the descent of an angel* was the obvious unavoidable solution of such a *phæ-nomenon*, as the *spontaneous fluctuation* of the pool, to a mind nurtured in the *Jewish* system of *theology*.

It must be thought extremely probable, that the *warmth* and *medical qualities* of the water had occasionally effected cures in *rheumatisms* and similar disorders, and had thereby excited an expectation of relief in other cases; but no circumstances in the *Apostle's* narrative imposes a restraint on my mind at least to conclude, that any *miraculous* restoration to health or soundness had been accomplished even in a single instance.

And

And the proneness* of all ages and nations to such credulity and superstition appears to rescue this interpretation, which is diffidently proposed to the judicious reader, from every imputation of improbability.

The following extract from a most respectable author will accede as no mean corroboration of these remarks.

“ From *Chester* I rode—to *Halitwell*; where I
 “ saw and drank of the so much famed water of
 “ *St. Winifred's* well, which I knew not how to
 “ distinguish from common water.—Over it is a
 “ handsome stone building, and by it a chapel,
 “ where lie continually a great number of poor,
 “ lame, impotent people; more, I believe, to beg
 “ and receive the alms of strangers, that either
 “ out of curiosity or devotion come to visit and

* I once knew a person, who strenuously maintained, that a *conjurer* in the neighbourhood could raise *spirits* when he pleased; and that his own son-in-law and many others had been present at the time. When I declared my utter persuasion of the impossibility of such a power, he affirmed, that he would bring the *conjurer*, who often came to the town, to exhibit before me. I accepted the proposal, and promised moreover to reward the exhibitor with *ten guineas*, for a successful operation of his art. This was too critical a test for our *conjurer's* manœuvres; and terminated the dispute. I heard no more of his performances.

“ see

“ see the well, than out of hope to receive much
 “ benefit by the use of this water; though the
 “ inhabitants of this place will tell you stories
 “ enough, very CONFIDENTLY and CIRCUM-
 “ STANTIALLY, of LATELY DONE MIRACULOUS
 “ CURES by the use thereof: but I have learned,
 “ that to distrust is *nervus sapientiæ**: alluding to
 the celebrated *trochaic* of *Epicharmus*:

Ναφε, και μεμνασ' απισειν. αρθρα ταυτα των φρονων.

Upon the whole, the example here alledged,
 not only illustrates and supports the previous ar-
 gument, but, if I do not deceive myself, may be
 justly proposed as a specimen of LIBERAL IN-
 TERPRETATION of the Scriptures, grounded upon
 a suitable apprehension of the value of *Hebrew*
phraseology: and such an interpretation, as will
 appear, perhaps, on a competent estimation, not
 less unexceptionable in itself, than calculated to
 place many important passages of the *Jewish* and
Christian revelations beyond the reach of *Sciolists*
 and *Sceptics* of every denomination.

Further: this proposition, which I am attempt-
 ing to establish, will be ascertained to the *philolo-*

* *Ray's Itinerary*, p. 21. and this, it may be observed,
 at a time when the propensity to such *marvellous* faith was
 considerably impaired in the minds even of the vulgar in
 this country.

ger with indisputable evidence from an acquaintance with the *oriental* languages; and others, whose opportunities, or inclination has not furnished them with this criterion of authenticity, may reap abundant conviction from *Lightfoot's Talmudical* - illustrations of the *New Testament*; who, beyond any other writer that has fallen under my notice, shews, with learning most profound and industry most unwearied*, the circumstantial correspondence of the *evangelical* narrations to the sayings, maxims, traditions, usages, and manners of the *Jewish* nation. No attestations of this nature, more minute, more copious, and more diversified, ever co-operated to the establishment of any *moral* and *political* truth whatever.

And, that I may not suffer to go by me a convenient opportunity of enforcing a congenial argument in favour of the *sacred writings*, I will further entreat the reader to consider, whether

* He was one of a host of extraordinary scholars, produced by the *Universities* of *England*, and particularly *Cambridge*, during the last century; to whose learning our indolent and puny age cannot, I am afraid, produce even a *tythe* of parallels. Let me specify a few *Cambridge-men*, that present themselves to memory. Bishops *Walton*, *Wilkins*, *Beveridge*, *Pearson*, and *Stillingfleet*; *Patrick*: *Mede*, *Cudworth*, *Lightfoot*, *Spenser*, *Castell*, *Barrow*, *Burnet*, and *Milton*.

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the accordance of the multifarious *customs, persons, places, characters, incidents*, and other peculiar circumstances, thickly sown through the pages of these histories, and connected with the most polished age and nation of antiquity, productive of many illustrious authors, with whom a comparison may be instituted in this respect; whether, I say, the accordance of such a multiplicity of particulars with the contents of other authentic contemporary records, does not amount to a proof almost demonstrative, that the books in question were produced by writers of *that* time, well acquainted with the subject-matter of their respective performances.

But, before I conclude this *Section*, why should I hesitate to propose an additional specimen or two of similar interpretation, to the judgement of intelligent and candid *theologians*; those, I mean, who love a rational and liberal criticism of the *scriptures*, as the only possible method of recommending their contents to learned and inquisitive readers of every description, beyond the defence of circumscribed *creeds* and established *systems* of belief? For *creeds* and *systems*, the children of ignorance and the nurselings of authority, are doomed to mortality, like the perishable authors of their being; whilst *Truth* and *Reason*, the emanations of God himself, without the props of human

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man institutions, will continue, unimpaired as his own eternity, when the earth and the heavens shall be no more.

And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.*

The silence of the other evangelists respecting so remarkable a phenomenon, accepted in its literal intention, naturally inclines me to look out for an interpretation, that will mollify this difficulty, and fall in with the general character of the writers. Now it seems to me, (who labour at least to dig out truth from the mine) that the fortitude, which our Lord appears to have recovered in so sudden and unexpected a manner, would be attributed by a Jew to the interference of *Jehovah* through the mediation of an *angel*, in consequence of the predominant persuasion, interwoven with all the ideas of this people, that every extraordinary event in particular was the immediate execution of God himself.

To the same mode of solution I would willingly refer Acts xvi. 7. *And, having come to Mysia, they were attempting to go by Bithynia; and the SPIRIT suffered them not: that is, THEIR OWN JUDGEMENT, on maturer consideration, strongly assured them, that the purposes of their mission*

* Luke xxii. 43.

would

would not be promoted by what appeared to them an eligible measure.

A passage from *Xenophon's Apology for Socrates* will throw light on the text before us, and, according to my apprehension, will admit of no other acceptance.

"But indeed*, says *Socrates*, though I have already attempted even twice to consider of an apology, the *dæmon* still opposes me:" i. e. my secret conviction—my conscience—the deliberate and impartial decision of my own mind. The philosopher meant nothing more by this phrase, which has produced so much dispute and speculation.

Hence also an observable declaration of our Lord, recorded by *St. John*, appears in my judgement, to admit an unforced and satisfactory explanation.

* ΑΛΛΑ ναι μα θα, φαναι αυτοι, και δις ηδὲ επιχειρησαντ᾽ με σκοπειν περι της απολογιας, ιναντιωται μοι το δαιμονιον. Sect. 4.

Homer, as in numberless other passages, thus expresses the judgement of *Diomedes*. Il. K. 365.

ΑΛΛ', ὅτε δὴ ταχ' ἐμῆλλε μνηστῆσθαι Φυλακισσοί,
Φευγων εἰς νηας, τότε δὴ μιν ἐμβάλ' Ἀθηνη
Τυδείδῃ.

When Dolon soon had mingled with the watch,
Quick-running to the ships; MINERVA SENT
AN IMPULSE TO THE BREAST of Tydæus' son.

Henceforth* ye will see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending to the son of man.

By which I understand simply, that ye will be witnesses to extraordinary communications of the Deity, and to frequent displays of divine power.

Part of an address to his disciples, ascribed by Ovid† to Pythagoras, will supply a pleasing specimen of a congenial phraseology.

*Et, quoniam DEUS ora movet, sequar ora moventem
Ritū DEUM; Delphosque meos, IPSUMQUE RECLUDAM
ÆTHERA; et augustæ reserabo oracula mentis.*

*GOD prompts my lips, and I the call divine
Will duly follow. Lo! the portals high
Of ÆTHER'S SELF I OPEN, and disclose
The shrine oracular of celestial truth.*

But it is time to proceed with our remarks.

REMARK III.

No candid mind can desire, and no ingenuity could devise, a more convincing *internal evidence* of the validity of the *Gospel* narratives, than the **SUPERLATIVE PRE-EMINENCE** of their **MORA-**

* C. i. v. 52.

† Metam. xv. 143.

LITY, in competition with the doctrines of *Gentile* philosophy, and the deductions of what is usually called *natural Religion*.

This topic, I am aware, has been amply discussed by a variety of writers of more leisure, more ability, more patience, and more industry, than myself. It remains, therefore, for me to exhibit only the statement of this argument in it's true point of view; which is indeed very striking and well worthy of attention.

The precepts of *Christianity*, respecting the regulation of human life in every branch of duty, whether *relative* or *personal*, not only excel in sublimity of sentiment, and in suitableness to the great end of all morality, I mean, the refinement of the heart and the exaltation of character to the highest point attainable by our measure of rational intelligence;—the gospel precepts not only excel, I say, in these respects the morality of any *single* philosopher of antiquity, but the concentrated wisdom of *every* moralist and philosopher of *every* age and nation, even when purged from that mass of impurity, absurdity, and error, which so debases the systems of *heathen* discipline.

This incontrovertible assertion is surely of prodigious moment, and impels the understanding with an irresistible force of evidence, without the counterbalance of, perhaps, a single particle

of palpable imbecility and folly in its composition. Nor am I conscious of any hazard, of any rashness, in this position: I feel no fear of drawing upon myself an imputation of groundless confidence or childish partiality. The field, however, is open to the unbeliever; the diligence and wit of ages have been employed in furnishing him with armour for the combat: the challenge is made in form, and the contest is capable of decision. But it were vain to expect from him an open engagement on terms, which a knowledge of antiquity will convince him to be so utterly unequal. The true scholar is but too well assured from evidence most unequivocal, that our *Galilean* has brought down from the skies what *Socrates*, inferior only to the *Galilean*, wisht, but wisht in vain.

Yet one fallacy, which has probably misled the understandings of many enquirers on this subject, must not go undetected. Produce me the man, who can justly claim a superiority, in native endowments of intellect and heart, and the accomplishments of learning, to the *Platos*, the *Aristotles*, the *Xenophons*, the *Tullies*, of *Greece* and *Rome*. Is that, shall we suppose, within the compass of his capacity, which these heroes of literature and genius were unable to attain?—So then, to form a true judgement of the powers of *unassisted* reason
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and the progress of *natural religion*, we ought, in all propriety and fairness, to recur to those systems of *morality*, which existed BEFORE the birth of *Christ*. THEY ALONE are the reasonable specimens of *those powers*;—the genuine criterion of *that progress*. The numerous schemes of *moral philosophy*, devised, or rather drawn up, beneath the sunshine of gospel light, have received too much illumination from that source of brightness, to pass with considerate examiners for a proper test of the abilities of man, unaided by revelation*. Yes; educated under those benign influences,

* To this purpose our great poet *Dryden* in his *religio laici*:

Vain wretched creature! how art thou misled
To think thy wit these godlike notions bred!
These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropp'd from Heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd Religion first inform'd thy sight,
And *Reason* saw not 'till Faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source:
'Tis *Revelation* what thou thinks't discourse.
Else how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not *Plato* these, nor *Aristotle* found;
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime?
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?

influences, which *christianity* has shed on life and manners, we have imperceptibly imbibed a portion of it's vivifying spirit; and easily mistake that for an emanation of *unborrowed light*, which is but a *reflection* of a brighter luminary, unobserved merely from a long familiarity with it's effects. The fountain of living waters first flowed indeed only through the country of *Judea*; but has since distributed rivulets of health and vigour through every civilized region of the universe. Nay, further; the purer morality of the later *Grecian* schools, and the striking superiority discernible in the theories of modern times over those of the old philosophers, afford of themselves an incontrovertible demonstration, that the *waters of Israel* far transcend in salutary virtues *Arbana* and *Pharpar*, and all the rivers of *Damascus*.

To conclude: we will state the question in few words, and much it behoves the *deistical speculator* to return an answer, that will secure him a conscientious retention of his system.

Canst thou by reason more of godhead know
 Than *Plutarch*, *Seneca*, or *Cicero*?
 Those giant wits in happier ages born,
 When arms and arts did *Greece* and *Rome* adorn,
 Knew no such system; no such piles cou'd raise
 Of natural worship, built on prayer and praise
 To one sole God,

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COULD the son of a *carpenter*—could a tribe of *fishermen*, unassisted by the peculiar favours of the Deity—thus outstrip the WHOLE ASSEMBLAGE of illustrious PHILOSOPHERS, and advance *morality* to perfection by a SINGLE EFFORT*.

Tossed about by the contending waves of *Gentile* philosophy, and wandering with an uncertain course under the malignant glimmerings of *natural religion*, my vessel flies for refuge into the haven of the *gospel*; where she may cast at length the anchor of her hope, and ride in safety.

* We may apply on the present occasion a sagacious remark of *Dionysius the Halicarnassian*, antt. Rom. vii. sub finem. Ολίγα μιν γὰρ επιτηδευματα περὶ θυσίας τε καὶ ιερῶν ἡμῶν, Ἕλλησι καὶ βαρβάρῃς τινὰς ἐπιτελεῖν ὑδὲχεται, ἀπάρτα δὲ πάντα πράττειν ἀπίθανον.

Quis casum meritis ascribere talibus audeat?

Hæc negat auctorem quis statuisse Deum?

CLAUDIAN.

In confirmation of the preceding remarks, I would recommend to the reader's perusal some admirable reflections, delivered with equal strength and simplicity of reasoning, in *DOCTOR CRAIG's Life of Christ*, pp. 138, 139. 2d edition: which it were injurious to weaken by mutilated quotations.

REMARK

REMARK IV.

If the moral satyr^{ist} could pronounce with propriety of the philosophical maxim, *Know thyself*, that it came down from heaven*; with much more justice may the advocates of christianity put in the claim of cœlestial extraction for these injunctions of it's founder:

But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them, who curse you; do good to them, who hate you; and pray for them, who injuriously use you and persecute you†.

Such are the godlike precepts of our christian lawgiver! Hear him deliver the same lesson of the most pure and sublime morality with an energy still more pathetic, and a simplicity still more engaging:

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another‡.

A precept of such refined benevolence, which enjoins even the sacrifice of life itself in the cause of friendship§, could only stream from the over-

* ——— *ē coelo descendit Trud, ciavter:*

JUVENAL. xi. 27.

† Matt. v. 44.

‡ John xiii. 34.

§ John xv. 13.

flowing fountain of universal and unbounded LOVE. For any other source of such a pure effusion I look round in vain*. The history of our species from the beginning of the world to this hour,—the systems of philosophers,—the theory of the human mind,—the deductions of experience,—the report of my own heart,—ALL unite in riveting me to *this* solution. What, possibly fabulous, antiquity in that instance† of their *Pylades* and *Orestes* could extol with such excess of panegyric, *Jesus of Nazareth* not only accomplit in his own person, with every circumstance that could ennoble such a dignified display of love and friendship, but requires also of his disciples, as the unambiguous test of their adherence to his cause, and their worthy profession of his name and doctrine. In this respect even the law of *Moses* will bear no competition with the pre-eminent merit of the gospel‡: and

* See John v. 19. Col. ii. 9.

† *Unus erat Pylades, unus qui mallet Orestes
Ipse mori: lis una fuit per sæcula mortis,
Alter quod raperet fatum, non cederet alter.*

Manil. ii. 588.

‡ Matt. v. 43. Juv. Sat. xiv. 103.

*Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti;
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.*

all

all other founders of sects and fathers of doctrine, as far as my acquaintance with them has extended, of whatever age and nation*, have mixed with their systems, in a greater or less portion, some unpropitious and corrosive ingredients,—some bitterness of *party zeal*,—some sour infusion of *excluding and persecuting principles*.—And alas! how inadequately have even the followers of *Jesus* profited, either by the example or the commandment of their master! Those rankling disorders of the heart, which his tenderness and love was ever assiduous to soothe by mollifying instillations of *oil and wine*, his infatuated false disciples have so inflamed by animosities and hatred, that, in some periods of the *Christian* history, the body of

* *Solon's* benevolence was of a *Judaical* complexion:

Εἶναι δὲ γλυκύν ὡς φίλοις, ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρὸν
 Τοῖσι μὲν αἰδοῖον, τοῖσι δὲ δύναι ἰδαίν.

To the same purpose *Aristotle*, rhet. i. 9, 3. Καὶ το τῶς ἐχθρὸς τιμωρεῖσθαι μάλλον, καὶ μὴ καταλλαττεῖσθαι· το τε γὰρ ἀνταποδιδόναι δικαίον· το δὲ δικαίον, καλόν· καὶ ἀνδρεῖν, το μὴ ἡτλασθαι.

Compare also the following remark of the *Stagyrite* in the same work, i. 7. 2. Καὶ το ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐν ποιεῖν δοξεῖν ἐν αἰρετικῶσι εἶναι· το μὲν γὰρ, καὶ λαμβάνη, αἰρησέναι· ποιεῖν δ' ἐν λαμβάνειν οὐ δοκεῖ ἐν ἰλισθαι: with Matt. vi. 3. Acts xx. 35. though this unrivalled reasoner is there speaking, I acknowledge, not as a *philosopher*, but as a *rhetorician*.

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his Church has been little else than a noisome mass of wound, and bruise, and running sore*.

Next to this doctrine of *unlimited benevolence*, in dignity and usefulness, and alike demonstrative of the purity and magnanimity of it's author, is the doctrine of the *forgiveness of injuries*.

Peter said: Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?

Jesus saith unto him: I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven†.

Every reader of sensibility and taste, at the same time that his heart burns within him at the generosity and goodness of the preceptor, must be delighted with the language of the precept, redolent of the pure simplicity of ancient times; and proclaiming, beyond the reach of art and even the suspicion of spurious fabrication, the legitimacy of it's extraction from above.

The parable too, by which this noble precept is enforced, may be recommended to the reader, as exquisitely beautiful and engaging; the undoubted production of a mind intimately acquainted with the passions and propensities of the human heart.

* Isaiah i. 6.

† Matt. xviii. 21, 22. and to the same purpose other passages might be alledged, if necessary.

Should

Should the *deist*, like *Baal's* prophets, call upon his *natural religion* for such *proofs* of *divine wisdom*, such specimens of *cœlestial morality*, from *morning until noon*, no voice would be returned to his cries; no answer given. If even *Moses*, the oracle of the *Jews*, is willing to acknowledge the superiority of our *Christian* lawgiver, much more must the disciples of *natural religion* decline this unequal competition. But the *Hebrew* teacher has already borne an unaffected involuntary testimony to the transcendant merits of the messenger of the *new covenant*, by the mouth of the *Jewish* officers, who were sent to apprehend our Lord: NEVER MAN, said they, SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN*.

Nor must I omit to mention, under the head of this *remark*, the consolatory assurances, which the *gospels* abundantly supply, of the *goodness*, the *mercy*, the *placability*, of the *divine nature*; of the exceeding great love of the *Creator* for his *creatures*, and his earnest desire of their temporal and eternal welfare: in which praise the *Hebrew scriptures* must share with the *evangelical*. On the other hand, it is too well known to make any specification needful, what gloomy and frightful conceptions the generality of *heathens* entertained

* John vii. 46.

of the *deity*, (in which they have been unhappily imitated by the *papists* of succeeding times, and the morose fanatics of other churches) endeavouring to appease his wrath by sacrifices of the most horrid kind, by flagellations, penances, and every species of self-tormenting superstitions; as if the benevolent Ruler of the Universe could delight, like grim *Moloch* besmeared with blood, in the miseries of his subjects; as if the *father of all flesh* could be offended without a fault, and ruled the families of men with an iron rod of more than tyrannical ferocity :

— Antiphates trepidi laris, et Polyphemus.

As, however, it is not my wish to recommend the *gospel* by the defamation of *gentilism*, nor weakly to endeavour the advancement of the truth by concealment or disguise; we must allow, that some *heathen* writers entertained much more honourable sentiments of the *divinity*; though this concession must principally be restricted in favour of those authors, who lived in times that enabled them to fill their urns at the fountain of revealed light. Indeed, such alone, if I mistake not, maintain the sufficiency of *repentance* only, and *resolution of amendment*, to the forgiveness and favour of God. To this purpose is that illustrious passage
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in Phornutus, concerning the nature of the gods * :
They denominate also Jupiter THE PLACABLE,
from his disposition to relent towards those, who for-
sake iniquity : for he cannot possibly continue irre-
concilable to such. And on this account also, there
are altars erected to Jupiter THE GOD OF SUPPLI-
ANTS.

To which may be subjoined a remark of the
scholiast on Aristophanes † : Amendment is a sufficient
declaration, that the offence was involuntary : i. e. in
opposition to conscience and conviction.

For these reasons we may be indulged, as we
pass along, with expressing a more than ordinary
surprize, that modern Christians should relapse
into the very filth of heathenism, and imagine the
sacrifice of Jesus on the cross absolutely neces-
sary to appease the wrath of God, to satisfy his
justice, and render him placable to the human

* Cap. 11. edit. Gale. Προσηγοριαι δι' αὐτοῦ μνησθῶν τοῦ
Διὸς, ἐπιμαχίονος ὄντος τῶν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ μεταστέλλεσθαι· ὅτι γὰρ ἀδικῶν
ἀναστρέφεται πρὸς ἀρετὴν. Διὸ τὸν γὰρ καὶ Ἰουδίην Διὸς καὶ Βρομίου.

On this topic some beautiful verses in Seneca's *Agamem-*
non, v. 240. are well worthy of quotation.

Referamus illuc, unda non decuit prius

Abire : vel nunc casta repetatur fides.

Nam sera nunquam est ad bonos mores via.

Quem poenitet peccasse, pend est innocens.

† On the *Plutus*, v. 779. Ἄλλ' ἔτι τι περὶ τοῦ

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race; as if repentance and reformation were not adequate inducements with our heavenly Father, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*, to re-admit his alienated children into favour and protection!

REMARK V.

AN admired ancient has observed, with no less propriety of thought than elegant simplicity of diction, that “the word of *truth* is recommended “by its *plainness* and *perspicuity*; requiring no “subtleties of argument, no embellishments of “rhetoric, to produce conviction*.” TRUTH, it should seem, is in unison with the constitutional movements of our nature, and takes by a direct approach instantaneous possession of the heart.

In this view the *doctrines* of the *gospel* deserve the highest applause, and approbation. They are propounded to us in terms of all possible simplicity; and come accompanied by motives so plain, so reasonable, and so cogent, as to speak, one would imagine, with irresistible emphasis of per-

* Eurip. Phæn. 483.

Ἀπλῶς ὁ μὲν θεὸς τῆς ἀληθείας ἵψυ,

Κὲν ποικίλῃσι δὲ τὰνδ' ἰεμενυμάλῃσι.

suasion to every mind, not adulterated by *sophistry*, nor depraved by *vice*.*

The universal rule of human conduct, delivered by our Lord, is **CONCISE** and **FULL**; liable to no mistake or misapplication.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them †.

Nor are subordinate duties enforced with less pregnancy and decision of precept.

Servants, be obedient to your masters, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men ‡.

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven §.

* *Minucius Felix* observes with his customary elegance, *Atque etiã, quo imperitior sermo, hoc illustrior ratio est; quoniã non fucatur pompã facundiã et gratiã, sed, ut est, recti regulã sustinetur: Sect. 16.* To the same effect *Arnobius*, p. 34. edit. Lug. Bat. A. Sed ab indoctis hominibus et rudibus scripta sunt; et idcirco non sunt facili auditione credenda. B. Vide de magis hæc fortior causa sit cur illa sint nullis coinquinata mendaciis, mente simplici prodita, et ignarã lenociniis ampliare. A. Trivialis et sordidus sermo est. B. Nunquam enim veritas sectata est fucum; nec quod exploratum et certum est circumduci se patitur orationis per ambitum longiorem. Collectiones, enthymemata, definitiones, omniaque illa ornamenta, quibus fides quæritur assertionis, suspicantes adjuvant, non veritatis liniamenta demonstrant.

† *Matt. vii. 12.* ‡ *Eph. vi. 5, 7.* § *Col. iv. 1.*

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A multitude of other passages might be adduced in confirmation of this *Remark*: but they are well known; and I shall not multiply words in defending or explaining a position, which is level to every understanding, and will find an advocate in every breast. The charms of truth are but impaired by decoration.

REMARK VI.

Is it easy to conceive a point of doctrine more truly noble in itself, more interesting to human nature, and better calculated to inculcate more enlarged ideas of the *power* and *goodness* of the *Deity*, than the declaration of God's *indiscriminate* and *perpetual providence* over *universal nature*;—over the innumerable tribes of inanimate and living things? But, if the *philosopher* contemplates with astonishment the sublimity of this conception, the *philologist* will be no less delighted with the dignified plainness of the *language*, in which it is arrayed by an evangelist:

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

* Matt. x. 29, 30.

Which shall we pronounce the more predominant feature in this striking picture of the supreme Being,—the *affection* of the *Parent*, or the *power* of the *Creator*?—And what less, suffer me to ask, what less could utter such glad and awful tidings to mankind, than a voice from the oracle of the *sanctuary*, the *bosom of God himself**?

“God,” says *Newton* †, is all *EYE*, and *EAR*, and *SENSE*.” But this prince of philosophers, this glory, not of our nation only, but our species, refined his notions of the divinity from the favourite volume of his meditations; that volume, which had declared, that a *sparrow* ‡, nay even a *hair of*

* John i. 18.

† Schol. Gen. in Princip. The whole passage deserves quotation. Totus est sui similis, totus oculus, totus auris, totus cerebrum, totus brachium, totus vis sentiendi, intelligendi et agendi, sed more minimè humano, more minimè corporeo, more nobis prorsus incognito.

With this passage, one from *Pliny*, Nat. Hist. ii. 7. may very properly be compared. Quisquis est Deus, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus animæ, totus animi, totus sui.

‡ See Matt. x. 29, 30. Luke xxi. 18. This circumstance is touched upon with exquisite delicacy and tenderness in *Dibdin's Song of Poor Jack*; from a just conception, that such a beautiful and pathetic image would find a mirror in every bosom. The Saviour of mankind would have given

the head could not fall to the ground without vibrating through the remotest corner of God's creation.

Some observations of *Alexander* the disciple of *Aristotle*, preserved by *Cyril of Alexandria*,* will form no unentertaining supplement to this Remark, especially to the *English* reader:

"To say that God is not willing to exercise a
 "providence over worldly things, is a position
 "wholly foreign to his nature. It is *envy* alone
 "or *unreasonable absurdity* in one, who is able to
 "act better, to abstain. But, since both these
 "affections are foreign to God, he can be influ-
 "enced by neither. It remains, therefore, that
 "he is both able and willing to exert a provi-
 "dential care, and consequently exerts it. It is
 "reasonable then to infer, that no event, however

given no applause to the satire of our poet, however exquisite it's humour,

Die and endow a college or a cat:
 but would have reserved his approbation for that providential benignity, which laboured to rescue a favourite and persecuted animal from the cruelty of the brute, whether in the shape of man or dog.

* Pp. 61. 82 libb. ii. & iii. edit. Spanheim. Where *Cyril* observes, that some ascribe the same sentiments to *Plato*, but that *Zeno* and the *Stoics* unquestionably maintain them.

“trivial, takes place without the divine appointment and pleasure.”

“Nothing in the world comes to pass without a providence: for all things are full of the divinity, and it pervades the universe. So that all events take place according to the will of God; and to this the appearances themselves bear testimony. For the course of events, so regular as it is, affords a striking proof that these things are not by chance.”

REMARK VII.

NOR need the most sanguine admirer of Christianity desire a more convincing demonstration of the divine understanding of it's founder, a sharper weapon against the rage or malice of the adversaries of revelation, than the symptoms of wisdom, which display themselves in the following little history, delineated with such lively strokes of truth and nature.

Then one said unto him: Behold! thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

But he answered and said unto him that told him: Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

And

And he stretcht forth his hand towards his disciples, and said: Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*.

The precepts of *Jesus* oppose no dictate of our constitution, discourage no sensibility of nature, dissolve no tie of kindred or affection†. But our heavenly Father is of more consideration than our earthly; and the claims of purity, integrity, and virtue, are superior and antecedent, in the eye of reason and philosophy, even to the dearest attachments of consanguinity, whether of wife, child, or parent‡. The full, unequivocal, and decisive declaration, however, of this momentous truth was reserved for *Jesus Christ*, the word and wisdom of the Creator. Yet impartiality requires, that a philosopher of *Greece*, whose vigour and comprehension of intellect, whose sagacity of penetra-

* Matt. xii. 47.

† We may apply to them what *Themistius* has so elegantly commended in the Discourses of *Aristotle*: orat. κκxi. Αγαπωσιν εν οι τα μιν πολλα και εκ αναγκαια, δι απολαυει τε θνητο το αθανατο, παρακρυσθαι τε και αποκαθαρειν πατριω; τα δε οσα αμνηχανοι εκπλυτα και εξιτηλα ποιησαι, και αδ' εγχειχαρυνται και εν-διδυκαι εν τω βαθει, ταυτα δε επικοσμησθαι τε και επικαλδυνθαι, και το σφοδρα ευφαις αυτωι εξαλειφθαι.

‡ Luke xiv. 26.

tion,

tion, closeness of reasoning, diligence of research, extent and variety of learning, have never yet been equalled, should not be defrauded of his portion of commendation. *Aristotle*, in a beautiful Hymn to VIRTUE, had already pronounced her to be of more worth than gold and PARENTS*.

And does not an obvious reflection suggest itself on this occasion? Namely, that *philosophy* approximates by the same advances to the perfection of morality and to the precepts of the gospel; and that the great masters of heathen wisdom are more and more, in proportion to their excellence as teachers of virtue, almost and altogether CHRISTIANS. And what wonder? Truth, though exhibited in a different attire through the medium of a thousand intellects, refers her origin to the inexhaustible fountain of all perfection; as the rays of light, infinitely diversified as they may be in colour and direction, all diverge from the same candid and unremitting blaze of glory†.

† Unerring nature still divinely bright,
One clear unchanged and UNIVERSAL light.

POPE.

It is a beautiful remark of *Juvenal*, xiv. 321.
Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit:
NATURE and WISDOM the same doctrine teach.

REMARK

REMARK VIII.

The love of money, says the Apostle, is the root of all evil*. And a very superficial acquaintance with life and manners must evince the power of that sordid passion to corrupt every principle of virtue, and to deaden the most active propensities of our nature to mutual benevolence. "Cursed be the man," says the voluptuous *Anacreon*, "who first set his affections upon MONEY. "This destroys the love of brethren: this extinguishes the reciprocal regard of parent and of child: this is the source of war and murder†." Energy of language laudably expressive of the detestation of a generous spirit for such a groveling appetite! an appetite, whose peculiar operation is to absorb every social feeling of the soul, and convert the unhappy indulger of it into a monster of selfishness and inhumanity. Our Saviour proved himself to have a clear insight into its incredible influence upon the mind; and has

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

† Απολοιοιτο πρωτο· αυτο·

Ο τον αργυρον φιλησας·

Δια τωτον ηκ αδελφει,

Δια τωτον η τοκης·

Πολεμει, φοροι δι' αυτον.

signified

signified that total indisposition to the genuine fruits of religion and virtue, it's uniform and legitimate offspring! by one of those remarkable specimens of figurative expression, so familiar to the phraseology of the *East*:

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

This assertion alone would afford a satisfactory proof, independent of a multitude of others, that the favourite disciple was not blinded in his judgment by any groundless partiality for his master, when he declared of him, that HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN†.

REMARK IX.

THE following position in it's rigorous acceptation has appeared to many, no doubt, perfectly unwarrantable, and destitute of all reasonable probability; a mere *hyperbole* of rhetoric; upon more mature consideration, however, it will be found, I am persuaded, strictly conformable to the experience of daily life, and an undeniable demonstra-

* Matt. xix. 24.

† John ii. 25.

tion of a most accurate intuition into human manners,

And he said: Nay, Father Abraham! but, if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said unto him: If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

Nothing so clear and unquestionable, as that a disinclination to be persuaded will always start some ingenious cavil, will always devise some secret objection, to evade the force of the strongest argument. It is impossible to contradict a proposition, of which perpetual experience must furnish to every observer such abundant and irrefragable proof. As the excellent *Joseph Mede* somewhere insinuates, it is certain, that more must go to conviction, than *reason* and *demonstration*. Truth and good sense can procure no access to the avenues of the understanding through a heart enveloped by mists of prejudice, or stupified by the callous integuments of sensuality†. It is only the *purged*

* Luke xvi. 30, 31.

† See Matt. xiii. 15. Pers. Sat. 111. 33.

Sed stupet, hic vitio, et fibris increvit opimum

Pinguo.

Aristophanes, *Plut.* 600, has expressed this idea with uncommon energy:

Οὐ γὰρ πρὸς τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλ' ἡ τῆς φύσεως

*ear, that listens; and the single eye alone, that delights to see. Light may come into the world, but men will love darkness rather than light, if their DEEDS ARE EVIL.**

It might be of service to be more circumstantial in my illustration of this assertion of our Lord, had not the subject been treated with ability and success by others. In the mean time, a believer of the gospel will congratulate himself on a DEMONSTRATION from FACT of the truth of this maxim, which wears such an appearance of unnatural exaggeration, soon after it was uttered. That *perverse generation*, who could hear with indifference or contempt the exhortations and reproofs of their heavenly instructor, and could behold with such obstinate incredulity his numerous exhibitions of godlike power, were not *persuaded* by the restoration of *Lazarus* to life †; and still continued to resist the most unequivocal evidences, openly displayed by the apostles, of the resurrection of that same *Jesus*, whom they had crucified, from the dead. In this connection that relation of *St. Matthew*, c. xxviii. v. 11—15. is perfectly credible, and accurately consonant to experience.

* John iii. 19.

† John xi. 46, 47.

And,

And, as they departed, behold! some of the guard went into the city, and brought word to the chief-priests of all that had been done: and they, after assembling and consulting with the elders, gave a good sum of money to the soldiers; telling them to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him, while we were asleep."

The obduracy of wickedness has no limit to its progress. The cloud, at first no bigger than a man's hand, soon involves the whole horizon in obscurity. In such a case what alternative to persuasion can be discovered? The conduct of our Lord will ever recommend itself in this respect also as accurately consonant to the principles of consummate wisdom*. For this was the invariable tenour of his conduct; this was the uniform language of his addresses to the people: **WHOSO HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR.**

REMARK X.

THE christian religion began to deviate at an early period from the plain and exact standard

* Matt. xi. 19.

+ It is sensibly remarked by *Philemon*:

Χαλεποὶ ἀκροατῆς ἀσυνεῖς καθήμενοι.
Τπο γὰρ ἀνοίας ὤχ' ἱαυτοὶ μεμφέσται.

set

set forth by *Jesus* and his *Apostles*; and secular policy was soon busy in exerting its baneful interference in the government of a kingdom, which was expressly declared by its establisher not to be of THIS WORLD*. *Antichrist*, according to the prophecies concerning him, made haste to usurp a throne in the temple of God† himself, and presumed to promulgate laws, as the vicegerent of heaven, with a tone of absolute authority. This simple requisite of evangelical communion—I believe that *Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God*—might satisfy indeed that son of God himself, and those messengers, whom he commissioned to preach his name; but was deemed in no wise a sufficient declaration of religious faith by the succeeding hierarchs of the church. They were of opinion truly, in opposition to the declared sentiments of their master, that an unbounded liberty of prophesying would inevitably produce innumerable corruptions in religion; that TRUTH forsooth! would be injured by discussion; that the eternal purpose of God himself would be unable to continue firm without the salutary assistance of penalties and restrictions, to enforce conformity. Accordingly, the prop of civil power was called in

* John xviii, 36.

† ii Thess. ii, 4.

to unite it's imbecillity with the pillars of *divine* authority; and an accession of new materials, of *wood and hay and stubble** was thought necessary to give *strength and solidity* to that adamantine fabric, already established on a *rock*, against which *the gates of death* would be unable to prevail. The most palpable *injustice* in a violation of the *perfect law of liberty†*, and a sacrilegious *usurpation of the divine prerogative*, were utterly disregarded by the devisers of these wholesome expedients as of *trivial* consideration, when contrasted with the *possibility* of mischief from an absolute freedom of opinion. Nay, upon a subject immediately allied to this; *Milton's discourse on the liberty of the press* is declared by a writer‡ of as strong faculties, perhaps, as our own, or any other, nation has produced, to have occasioned a *problem in politics*, not solvable by the *human* understanding§.

* 1. Cor. iii. 12.

† James i. 25.

‡ Dr. Samuel Johnson.

§ See *Milton's Treatise*, p. 7. and *Archdeacon Blackburne's* *Strictures on Dr. Johnson's Life of Milton*: a most acute but acrimonious performance, and a surprising instance of intellectual vigour in extreme old age! Our illustrious bard could not have found a more willing and able advocate. *Hls saltē accumulem donis!* for this, and especially other services to the cause of religious liberty.

If this be a true decision, where can we so properly have recourse for the solution of a difficulty, which thus mocks, it seems, the capacity of the wisest *men*, as to that DIVINE UNDERSTANDING, so conspicuously exerted in the words and actions of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth?

Hear then, ye tyrants over the consciences of *another's servants*, who *must stand or fall to their own master*, and not to you*; hear the decision of your Lord on this most arduous problem: a decision, fraught with *the wisdom from above*, to the complete exposure of your absurd expedients, and the eternal confusion of *antichristian* policy.

LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST; LEST, WHILE YE GATHER UP THE TARES, YE ROOT UP THE WHEAT ALSO WITH THEM†.

Be at least ingenuous enough to confess, your feelings in the words of the *comic* writer, adduced under the preceding *remark*: "We will not be *convinced*, even if you should *convince* us."

* Rom. xiv. 4.

† Matt. xiii. 29, 30. See *Jeremy Taylor's* observations upon this text in numb. 6. sect. xiii. of that capital performance, *A Discourse on the Liberty of Prophesying*: 2d edition. Oh! that more of those brother *bishops*, who admire the *writer*, would imitate the *man*!

But

But my zeal for pure unfettered *Christianity* will not allow me to dismiss this important argument before I have offered a few more reflections, that suggest themselves, to the dispassionate consideration of my reader*.

Let us suppose some of the great philosophers of antiquity to be sitting in a room before us: *Socrates*, for example, with *Aristotle*, *Xenophon*, *Plato*, and, if you will, one or two more of the same stamp; children of *reason* and votaries of *virtue*. I would thus address them: "Some of our ancestors, *Græcian* sages! adopted certain notions of religious belief and polity, which numbers of my contemporaries have been contented to receive at their hands."—It is well; they might reply: "They have, no doubt, fully considered them *before* they assented to their contents: every individual is possessed of an indefeasible right to regulate his own belief, and to profess those doctrines, which are the *deliberate* and *disinterested* result of his conviction."—But then, I should rejoin; "Nor

* Whoever wishes to see the whole subject of *subscription to articles of faith*, most ably, elaborately, and fully discussed, must consult a late work on this subject by my most respectable and much valued friend MR. DYER, for *Johnson*, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*.

“content, ye free enquirers into truth! with
 “professing certain sentiments *themselves*, they
 “insist that *others* also either conform to the
 “standard of their doctrines, or be excluded, like
 “aliens rather than fellow-citizens, from the be-
 “nefits and comforts of the community*, in
 “which they live; exposed in many cases also to
 “fines and imprisonments.”—Is it necessary now
 to request a reader, impregnated with the noble
 writings of these illustrious writers, to represent
 to himself the surprise and indignation, which
 such a flagrant and unrighteous tyranny would
 awaken in their bosoms†? And yet we shall find

* With good reason, I trow, has a facetious son of
 orthodoxy, lately sung in the gaiety of his heart, *filled with*
the food and gladness of the church,

Be MINE the grape's PURE JUICE unmixt

With any base ingredient!

WATER to HERETICS I leave;

SOUND CHURCHMEN have no need on't.

Salmagundi, 8vo. edit. p. 72.

Such are the exhilarating effects of *fat sops ecclesiastical*!

—— SATUR est, cum dicit Horatius, *Evoe!*

† *Hoc igitur, quo tu Jovis aurem impellere tentas,*
Dic agetum Staio. "Proh! Jupiter! O! bone," clamet,
Jupiter!" At sese non clamat Jupiter ipse?

Persius, Sat. ii.

even

even *scholars*, who have boldly imbibed copious draughts at the pure fountains of ancient wisdom, (ah! what unworthy disciples of such preceptors!) stand forth as the hardy champions of *ecclesiastical domination* and *spiritual oppression* in the face of such a mass of overbearing evidence, both from *reason* and from *scripture*! Let others assign the motive for this prodigious solecism of conduct in men of letters and understanding. If my experience can at all assist them in the solution of this intricate problem, I shall not hesitate to declare, that I meet with not a single individual, at all distinguished for abilities and virtue, who is not shocked and confounded at these horrible invasions of liberty and conscience, EXCEPT THOSE ALONE immediately engaged, or expecting to be engaged, in promoting and enjoying the emoluments dependant on this system of iniquity and violence.

Again: The constitution of *civil society* in this country would convince me, independently of other arguments, and even that just stated, the invasion of God's prerogative, that the present condition of *religion*, as it generally subsists among us, is neither more nor less than genuine ANTI-CHRISTIANISM. Let me be as brief as possible on a point inexpressibly harrassing to a doating

lover of the gospel as it is in *Jesus**. Look at our civil governours: you will see rapacious devourers of the wealth of the community; profligate and inefficient statesmen, directing all their efforts to aggrandise themselves and favourites; fettering the trade and commerce of their country; grinding the poor, and benefiting by their depravity, without one scheme for their comfortable subsistence, their instruction in useful knowledge, their redemption from vice and infamy.—Then turn your eyes from this horrid scene to our spiritual guides and teachers; and content yourself with this single feature in the portrait:—*Bishops* and *Archbishops*, the servants of the PRINCE OF PEACE, at a juncture pregnant with calamity, at a moment of importance to the future happiness and liberties of the world, without a parallel in the annals of mankind—voting for WAR, in which even millions might perish by the sword and the executioner, when no pacific mediation had been attempted to avert so terrible an evil; an evil that degrades the human character BELOW the brute†!!!

* For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: Phil. iii. 18.

† *Indica tigris agit rabidd cum tigride pacem*

Perpetuam: savis inter se convenit ursis, Juvenal.

Now

Now, I ask, can the religion of *such* a state of society, be THE RELIGION OF THE GOSPEL? Are such *prelates* the *ministers* of JESUS? Yes; when *light* can incorporate with *darkness*—when *Christ* can have *fellowship* with *Belial*—then will such POLITY and RELIGION *meet together*;—then will such PRELACY and CHRISTIANITY *kiss each other*.

Un si bas, si honteux, si faux *Christianisme*,
Ne vaut pas des *Platons* l'*eclaire Paganisme*.

REMARK XI.

If we survey the conduct of other fathers of systems, founders of sects, and heads of parties;—if we contemplate the means, which *they* have generally employed to procure reputation and allure followers; the mode of acting and teaching adopted by *Jesus Christ* will appear, perhaps, in this respect perfectly peculiar and without example. No forgers of the gospel narratives in question (whose motives in the first instance to such an imposition would not easily be ascertained) could have discovered any inducement, either from an acquaintance with human manners, or the operations of the human

mind, to deliver such an extraordinary relation of the conduct of their hero. For my own part, I am able to devise no other tolerable solution of this difficulty, but this obvious supposition;—that the *gospel history* is in reality an accurate transcript from a TRUE ORIGINAL;—that such a personage as *Jesus of Nazareth* ACTUALLY APPEARED in the world; a genuine likeness of the picture, which is presented of him;—that he came with the express intention of publishing *such* a system of religion; of executing that unprecedented project of founding an universal empire over the affections and consciences of men, by the gentle constraints of *truth*, and the soothing captivations of *purity* and *love*.

Did *Jesus* allure his followers by ostentatious promises of wealth, power, reputation, or any temporal advantage whatsoever? Or was not the first and essential qualification of his disciples declared to be a relinquishment of every *worldly* expectation;—an abandonment for ever of the very idea, I do not say, of power, interest, and reputation, but even of ease and comfort? After his own example, who had not *where to lay his head*;—who endured every hardship, every danger and persecution, on his steep and rugged road to *Calvary*, where the bitter cup of his afflictions

fiction was emptied to the dregs;—after such a pattern of calamity and sorrow, the followers also of this master were expected, if the service of the gospel required such a sacrifice, to leave *house and land, and parent, and child, for his name's sake**—to encounter all those evils which the malice and bigotry of their countrymen could exercise upon them—to endure with patience those insults and *cruel mockings*, which have proved to spirits of sensibility a severer trial than even personal oppressions and corporeal torment—and to look daily, with a fearful expectation inseparable from humanity, as a *probable* event, for that same *baptism of blood*, in which he himself had been baptised†.

I will not withhold from the *English* reader a passage from the elegant *Lactantius*, in perfect harmony with the preceding observations †.

“ Besides, a disposition to fiction and deceit is
“ connected with a lust of secular advantage, and
“ a desire of gain; passions far removed from

* Matt. x. 37. Such was the language of *Virtue* to *Hercules*, Xen. mem. ii. Οὐκ ἐξαικνήσω δι' οὐδ' ἑνὶ προσμύῳ ἡδονῆς, ἀλλ', ὥστε δι' οὐδ' ἑνὶ διδόναι, τὰ οὐτὰ δηγήσομαι μετ' ἀληθείας. Ταῖς γὰρ οὐταῖς ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν ἔστιν ἀνὺ ποῦς καὶ ἐπιμελείας θεοῦ διδάσκειν ἀνθρώποις. See upon this subject Euseb. Dem. Evang. iii. 5. sub init. who argues the point very sensibly.

† Matt xx. 22.

+ Lib. i. c. 4. De falsa religione.

“ those

those holy men. For they so discharged the office
 “ delegated to them, as to relinquish every thing
 “ necessary for the support of life, without a pro-
 “ vision, not merely for futurity, but the passing
 “ day; contented with the extemporaneous suste-
 “ nance, which God might supply: and not only
 “ reapt no benefit of gain, but even tortures
 “ and death itself. For the precepts of righteous-
 “ ness are bitter to men of vicious and depraved
 “ lives. Those, therefore, whose sins were con-
 “ victed and forbidden, procured their deaths with
 “ the bitterness of torment. These teachers then,
 “ who were free from the love of gain, were also
 “ free from every disposition and motive to im-
 “ posture.”

how, or why,
 Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
 Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice;
 STARVING their GAIN, and MARTYRDOM their
 PRICE*.

The intelligent reader will be able without any
 assistance from me to draw suitable inferences in
 favour of the proposition which I am maintain-
 ing, from the following topics laid down by *Aris-*

* *Dryden's Religio Laici.*

totle

totle in his treatise on *rhetoric*, written to *Alexander* *.

“ When the witness is suspected, it is our duty
“ to shew, that he would not bear testimony to a
“ falsehood from motives of favour, revenge, or
“ gain. We ought also to explain the inexpedi-
“ ency of testifying to a lie: for the benefits are
“ small, but detection is of serious consequence,
“ not only with respect to legal punishment, but
“ loss of character and credibility.”

Our Lord also, on every occasion, most studiously avoided *popular applause*; nor did he hesitate to reprove with severity and boldness, before all the people, those professors, whose name and

* Sect. 16. edit. *Sylburgii*. It is delightful to observe the manly dignity with which our illustrious philosopher addresses the Conqueror of the world. *Ἀριστοτὴς Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ.* “ ARISTOTLE wisheth prosperity to ALEXANDER.” A tone of independance becoming a man of letters! How different from the adulation of a modern dedicator to one infinitely inferiour in accomplishments and greatness to the *Macedonian* monarch. To the SACRED MAJESTY—May it please your MAJESTY—Your MAJESTY’s most dutiful, most devoted, &c. subject and servant.” A *Grecian* patriot would have eyed us fulsome reptiles with a look of unutterable scorn. One is almost tempted to exclaim with *Horace*,

— Hos utinam inter
Heroes natum tellus me prima tulisset!

influence

influence would have been the most serviceable in promoting his secular interest and establishing his regal authority; and, in one instance, he retired with secret precipitation before that torrent of enthusiastic admiration, which would have borne him to a throne*.

By what model, I ask our adversaries, by what existing model could an impostor fashion such a character as this? What principle of *experience*, what analogy of *history*, what motive of *human action*, could furnish him with a suitable foundation for a superstructure so unexampled in all its parts?

Until a direct and explicit answer can be given to this question, as *sound philosophy* has taught me not to admit *more* causes than what are sufficient for the explanation of the *phænomena*, I feel myself compelled to conclude, that the life and actions of *Jesus Christ*, correspondent to the record transmitted of them in the *gospels*, were the undoubted *prototype* presented to the eye of our *evangelists*; and that this same *Jesus* truly was a *man*, approved of God, by *miracles*, and *wonders*, and *signs*, and rose from the grave on the third day, after he had been by *wicked hands* crucified and slain†.

* John vi. 15. † Acts ii. 22—25.

REMARK XII.

THAT indirect method of conveying *instruction*, so frequently and happily employed by our Lord, displays, in my opinion, a wonderful combination of discretion, dexterity, and acuteness; and is on every account such as becomes the character of *a teacher sent from God*.

In this view, what can be more admirable, than that judgement and address, which uniformly endeavoured to call forth into action the *reasoning faculties* of his audience, and to invite the understanding to a due exertion of those powers, which characterise and dignify our species:

———— *aditus, et quæ mollissima fandi
Tempora; quis rebus dexter modus.*

When he intended to restore a bed-ridden *paralytic* to health and strength*, it were easy for him to say, *Arise and walk*; and the *miracle* itself would have been equally complete. But the constant object of this watchful servant of *Jehovah*, was the accomplishment of *all* the good within his power; and the occasion he judged favourable to an additional enforcement of his purpose. With an act of benevolence to the *body*, he was willing to unite an effort to illuminate the *soul*, in calling

* Matt. ix. 2—7.

the attention of the by-standers, by an indirect expression, to the nature of his character. His language, therefore, to the sick person was modelled accordingly: *Son! thy sins be forgiven thee.* A peculiarity of expression, calculated to draw on the inquisitive and ingenuous hearer to this conclusion; that the speaker claimed, by virtue of a heavenly commission, that high prerogative of the Divinity, *the forgiveness of sins*: and the miracles, which he was enabled to perform, ought in all reason to have convinced them at the same time, that he did not exercise this prerogative upon *false pretensions*; for *no man*, according to the just acknowledgement of the *Jewish Ruler*, *could do such things except God were with him**.

All the *parables* of our Lord furnish also abundant proofs of the justice of this *Remark*; and may be considered as so many judicious lessons, drawn up with infinite address, and eminently adapted to rouse the understandings, engage the affections, and touch the sensibility of his hearers by the most delicate strokes of nature and of passion. Indeed, we might almost venture an appeal for the authenticity of our Lord's pretensions to a heavenly designation, to his PARABLES ALONE.

* John iii. 2.

All

All are beautiful; the truest delineation of human manners, embellished with every grace which an unelaborate lovely simplicity of diction is able to bestow; graces, beyond the reach of the most studied artifice of composition: but *two* of the number shine among the rest with unrivalled splendor; and we may safely challenge the genius of antiquity to produce, from all his stores of elegance and beauty, such unaffected specimens of pathetic painting, as the *parables of the Prodigal Son*, and the *Good Samaritan*.

But I forbear to enlarge upon this subject. The *gospels* are in every body's hands; and the ingenious student of the scriptures will find in every page sufficient vouchers to the truth of my proposition. Let him make the application for himself; and build up his faith with those materials, which are so copiously laid before him.

REMARK XIII.

THE reception which the insidious contrivances and the premeditated sophistry of the learned professors among the *established clergy* of the *Jews* never failed to meet with from our Saviour, evinced a tranquillity of temper, which no provocation could derange; a quickness of recollection, which

which no artifice could surprise; a sagacity of apprehension, a solidity of understanding, which no subtleties could divert or confound.

When the *Pharisees* ascribed his miraculous operations to the confederacy of *evil spirits*, with what simplicity and strength of reasoning did he expose the despicable inconsistency and malignant prejudices of these miserable cavillers! *A family, divided against itself, cannot stand.*—"If my miracles are the work of *Beelzebub*, by whose power do your disciples pretend to work them?"—"Whoso entereth a strong man's house, and plundereth his goods, is stronger than he*." Truths of intuition: mere axioms of morality.

But, without descending to an enumeration of particulars so well known, I shall content myself with directing the attention of the reader to the story of the woman taken in adultery †.

The

* Matt xii. 25, 30 Luke xi. 22.

To the same purpose *Menander* in *Clem. Alex.*

— εἰ γὰρ ἔλθῃ τὸν θεόν

τοῖς κυβέλοισι ἀνδρῶν· εἰς ἡβδαίσαι,

ὁ τοῦ πονηροῦ μισθὸν τῷ θεῷ.

† John viii. 3—12. There are, I know, some reasons to suspect the genuineness of this piece of history in particular; but the internal symptoms of authenticity incline me to believe the fact, though, as it stands in this gospel, it should be deemed an interpolation, and not the narrative of

The difficulty and danger of the dilemma, to which our Lord was reduced by his captious adversaries on this embarrassing occasion, are extremely obvious. To have pronounced an acquittal of the woman would have been not only a flagrant opposition to the express injunction of the *Mosaic* law upon this point, but such a palpable encouragement of a most criminal intercourse, subversive of all society, as must have totally destroyed his credit as a *moral* teacher among his countrymen. On the other hand, though no *judicial authority*, as a public magistrate, was invested in him, yet his popularity might have given his determination all the efficacy of a legal sentence; and the populace, in all probability, would have proceeded immediately to execute the punishment of their legislator, by stoning the criminal to

of our *evangelist*. See the whole transaction excellently commented upon and explained in the *second* volume of *Bishop Hurd's Sermons at Lincoln's-Inn*; and some pertinent remarks in *Mr. Paley's Philosophy*, book iii. chap. 4. a work, admirably calculated for utility, and propounding principles, which lead to more extensive conclusions, than the prudent author, for obvious reasons, was willing to infer. When I read such productions of such incomparable talents, as those possessed by *Mr. Paley*, I breathe the fervent wish of the *apocalyptic mystagogue*: *I would thou wert either COLD or HOT!*

death. Now the tumult itself, unavoidable in this case, and much more such an infringement of the authority of the *Roman* government, which had taken the power of inflicting capital punishments into their own hands, would have furnished the enemies of *Jesus* with a very fair pretence for an accusation of sedition, and rebellion against the state. What measures then could be pursued in so trying an emergency? And what ingenuity would not have felt itself at a loss for an expedient capable of securing it's own reputation, and disappointing the malice of it's adversaries, without affording any countenance to such a dangerous and sinful act? Observe then, whether our Lord did not display a presence of mind and a dexterity of invention, which nothing can exceed*. LET HIM, says he, *that is without sin among you, cast the first stone at her.*

Few

* With respect to his *writing upon the ground*, the written words might be something applicable to the occasion, and have their share in the confusion which ensued. *Lightfoot* (hor. heb. in locum) after observing from Num. v. 17, 23. that the priest, who examined the suspected wife, was enjoined to *bend* himself, and gather *dust* from the *floor* of the sanctuary to mix with the potion; and to *write* in a book the curses to be pronounced against her—subjoins: “In conformity to these directions, *Christ* also
bends

Few words, but fruitful materials for reflection! — Those sanctified hypocrites, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, hereby received a just rebuke for their uncharitable eagerness to fasten a stain on others, when they themselves were dyed so deeply in depravity. The arrow reacht the consciences, to which it was directed. The subsequent conduct of these hypocrites bore testimony to the poignancy of it's effect. *They went out one by one*.*

"bends himself, uses the pavement as a book by writing something in the dust, levelled doubtless against the accusers, who were making trial of him; analogous to the curses written by the priest against the woman whose character was to be tried."

Some remarks of the Scholiast on *Aristophanes*, *Acharn.* 31. appear to me too pertinent to be neglected on this occasion.

[Γραφω, παρατίλλομαι] γραφω μιν, καταγραφω, η ζωγραφω, απο της γης, ζων το δακτυλο, η τινι τοιωτω παιδιας τι. — Ταυτα δε παρτα ποιουν δι ΠΡΟΣΔΕΧΟΜΕΝΟΙ μιν τι, τοι δε χρονοι δαπανωντες εις αποριαν και αμηχανιαν, μη τυγχανοντες τι προσδοκωμεν λογιμα. — δε γαρ αυτοι σφ' ιαυτων τιδεται αλυσοντες, και επι γης διαγραφουσιν.

* *Them thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touch'd lightly: for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to it's own likeness. Up they start,
Discover'd and surpriz'd.*

Par. Lost, iv. 810.

But

P

Yet

Yet our Lord gave no sanction to *adultery*. The woman's guilt is clearly acknowledged, when leave is given to the *innocent* to put the law into execution against her. The inability of her adversaries to accept this condition does not prove, or imply, *her* innocence in the judgement of our Saviour. The infidel can make out no just exception to our Lord's character upon this ground. Indeed, he expressly tells the woman to *go and sin no more*.

But our antagonist will object; "HE does not condemn her"—*Neither do I condemn thee*:—"And this," he will add, "amounts at least to an unpardonable connivance at her transgression." To this it may be replied in the *first* place, that he *came not*, according to his own declaration, *into the world to condemn the world**, and to execute the office of a *secular magistrate*: (and it is but reasonable to try him by his own professed principles; in which, we think, no inconsistency can be found)—and, in the *next* place, any exercise of *judicial authority* would have stood in direct contradiction to that deference and subordination, which he constantly shewed in his own person,

* John iii. 17. viii. 15. xii. 47. Luke xii. 14—27.

and

and inculcated on others, to the power of the civil governour.

But I pass on to other considerations.

REMARK XIV.

ANOTHER incident, though comparatively trivial in itself, supplies us with no insignificant testimonial of a nobleness of mind, that will not allow any *selfish* considerations whatsoever to interfere with the respect antecedently due to propriety and merit. Sensible as our Lord must have been of *Martha's* officious assiduity to oblige him by providing a variety of dishes for his entertainment*; his superior love of intrinsic excellence and the higher virtues induced him to regard with sentiments of peculiar fondness and approbation the conduct of her sister, who was

* Luke x. 38. This interpretation was first suggested, as far as I know, by *Bishop Pearce*, and is scouted by some as ridiculously contemptible and extravagantly childish: worthy themselves of ridicule, as exhibiting thereby a pregnant proof of super-abundant ignorance of our Saviour's habits, and the manners and language of that time and country.

Derisor potius quàm deridendus senex.

sitting at his feet, imbibing with an eager fond attention the gracious accents, that dropt from the lips of her preceptor. The suggestions of *vanity* could not soothe this impartial examiner of actions into a suppression of the *truth*; nor was the steady light of so pure a judgement to be broken by the obliquity of even personal attachment in union with those suggestions. His approbation of *Mary's* wisdom comes attended with a rebuke of her sister's indifference to more momentous objects; but a rebuke gentle and kind and delicate, suited to the sensibility of so affectionate a friend*.

Martha! Martha! thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

REMARK XV.

THE vigour of understanding, the undisturbed firmness of mind, and the resignation of soul to the will of Providence, manifested in that remarkable crisis, the *temptation* of our Saviour, constitute one of the most illustrious transactions in a life, distinguished throughout by every species

* See John xi. 5.

of wisdom, magnanimity, and virtue. In whatever light the *speculative theologian* may be inclined to view this apparently singular event, whether as a *vision*, a *private meditation*, or a *real action*; the æquanimity and address therein displayed will be precisely the *same*: and, if the unbeliever should feel disposed to regard the circumstance as a mere fiction of the relator, the difficulty will continue to pursue him; and some reasonable account of such admirable readiness and sagacity, such strength of argument, in a contemptible and uninformed *Jew*, will still demand a solution from the theorist and philosopher.

When the *tempter* urged *Jesus* to exert his power for the relief of that necessity, which must have been unusually pressing after so long an abstinence*, our Lord did not deny his ability to

* Admiring that judicious rule of *Horace*,

Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus

Insiderit,

Never presume to make a god appear

But for a business worthy of a god,

ROSCOMMON.

I always endeavour to find out a rational interpretation independent of *miraculous* interposition, whenever I can discover any countenance either in the *circumstances* of the *transaction* itself, or in the *phraseology* of

to perform the conversion of *stones into bread*; but represented the propriety of submission rather to the will and appointments of that Being, who had placed him in such a situation; intimating at the same time the absolute inefficacy in the end of any expedient in opposition to the intentions of the Almighty. *Man shall not live by bread*

the narrative. On this ground, it has sometimes occurred to me, that the *gospel history* would be disencumbered of no inconsiderable difficulty, if we could interpret this abstinence as *partial* only, and not a complete privation of food for the term of *forty days and forty nights*. The *baptist* abode in the *wilderness* as well as *Jesus*, *Matt. iii. 1.* and yet we are informed, that he sustained life with such nourishment as the place afforded, *locusts and wild honey*. But this information appears to have been merely incidental, and is not noticed by *Luke*: without it, however, if the mere *letter* of scripture must restrict us, we should have concluded, that the *baptist* not only *fasted forty days and forty nights*, but *all* the days and nights of his life, because our Lord himself has asserted, that *JOHN came NEITHER EATING NOR DRINKING*: *Math. xi. 18.*—In much the same unqualified language we are informed by *St. Luke*, *Acts xxvii. 33.* that the crew of their ship continued *WITHOUT FOOD thirteen days* compleat. But do we not immediately understand by this, that the ship's people had not taken their *regular and full meals* throughout this period? See some strictures on this passage of the *Acts* in the *fourth* part of my *Silva Critica*.

alone,

alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*.

A sublime sentiment! dictating at once a most serious and useful lesson to mankind, and declaratory of his own determination to obey his father's injunctions in their utmost rigour; to be poor himself, that his followers might be rich; to exert his powers, not for his own benefit and convenience, but for the good of others; fainting himself with the extremity of hunger, whilst he created food for multitudes in a wilderness.

The next effort of the tempter was not less insidious; and in truth a most dangerous snare for a vain and ambitious spirit. Had Jesus thrown himself down from the battlements of the temple among the crouds below, and escaped unhurt by the sustaining arm of the Deity; such a miraculous exhibition could not have failed to engage the attention of the people in his favour, as vulgar minds are more easily captivated by feats of ostentation than beneficence: and this admiration of the multitudes would have opened a wide door to any projects of ambition. But, notwithstanding the direct words of scripture, which were produced in justification of this proposal, our Lord

* Matt. iv. 1—11.

was too well acquainted with the terms of divine favour and support, and with the uses, for which his supernatural endowments were conferred upon him, to be baffled and seduced by such an artful insinuation. *Thou shalt not tempt,* says he, *the Lord thy God.*

In conformity with this noble declaration, *Jesus Christ* was most cautious on every occasion to render no interference of *miraculous power* necessary in his behalf. He never gave way to the enthusiastic admiration of the populace, who were disposed to hail him as their King: he provoked no dangers, (from which only a miracle might have extricated him) that could possibly bring on, during the immaturity of his ministry, that catastrophe of his crucifixion before the hour appointed by his Father: and acquiesced in the desertion of his *twelve* faithless cowardly disciples, when a single petition could have called from heaven as many *legions of angels* to his assistance.

The *tempter* made his last appeal to that passion for power and grandeur and distinction, which has domineered with such universal sway over the hearts even of the generous and noble, in all times and countries; and daily alienates the affections of so many thousands from the *Creator* to the *creature*. The *Apostle* has remarked, with equal

equal truth and beauty, that *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world**. But that pestilence, which destroys, to borrow Solomon's expression, so many strong men, and spreads perpetual devastation both in the darkness and at noon-day, was unable to communicate it's contaminating influence to the vigorous and healthful constitution of this *Man of God*. The very idea of forsaking his allegiance to his Maker (the almost unavoidable consequence of enjoying *the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*) was unspeakably offensive to this pattern of constancy and faithfulness—this dutiful son and servant of the most High God. He replies with the quickness of a wounded and indignant spirit: *Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

From this last reply in particular it seems obvious and reasonable to infer, that our Saviour, during this temptation, had searched his own heart with minute and diligent inspection;—that he had consummated his determination to render his future life in all it's circumstances correspondent to his resolutions at the present crisis with invariable adherence. Towards the conclusion of

* John iii. 16.

his career, the impression, which the horrors of an agonizing death are recorded to have made on so lively an imagination and on feelings so tremblingly susceptible of agitation, appear to have brought with it some danger of defection from his uniform steadiness of conduct: but his *willing spirit*, after a temporary conflict with the weaknesses of the *flesh*, recovered it's serenity and firmness. *Arise*, said he: *let us depart*: "I am prepared to do, and to suffer, the whole will of God. I will welcome even the cross itself, as the criterion of my obedience—as my passport to immortality and glory."

I would not willingly entertain an unreasonable partiality even for the character of *Jesus Christ* himself; but I should offer violence to my own feelings and an insult to the truth, did I not ingenuously declare, that his conduct on all occasions, but especially at a juncture of *difficulty* and *danger*, excites within me a mingled inexpressible sensation of astonishment and delight. My heart, in the language of the *scriptures*, may be truly said to *leap for joy*. It's inward emotions correspond to the outward expressions of the transported cripple, when he found himself healed by the word of *Peter*; as they are described in terms, so lively and significant, as nothing less than *ocular observation* seems able to have suggested:

gested: *And the lame man LEAPING UP, STOOD, and WALKT; and entered with them into the temple, WALKING, and LEAPING, and PRAISING GOD*.*

REMARK XVI.

IN the next place, let an impartial reader peruse the pages of *gospel history*, and observe the treatment, which our Lord was perpetually receiving from his countrymen, in return for his repeated and solicitous endeavours to reclaim *them* from ignorance and sin to the blessings of *evangelical salvation*:—let him behold this meek and peaceable, this affectionate, and zealous prophet of the *glad tidings* of mercy and immortality—this gracious messenger of love, with health and comfort attendant on his steps,—insulted for the meanness of his parentage and occupation, the obscurity of his native place†, the insignificance and

* Acts iii. 8.

† It is astonishing with what sincerity we can condemn this absurdity of the *Nazarenes*, and pursue the same conduct ourselves with the most perfect cordiality and complacency imaginable. I accidentally opened at the bookseller's a day or two ago, a pamphlet in opposition to the *new notions* of government, &c. by Richard Hey, Esq. of the

and vileness of his followers, with an addition, no doubt, of many aggravating circumstances not recorded by the brief historians of his life,—many

the *Middle Temple*; and the first passage, which occurred to my eye, was to the following purport: "It would be well, if the reader, before he peruses the works of *Thomas Paine*, would look over his life by *Mr. Oldys*." Now this single sentence is enough with me to damn his whole performance, independent of the suspicion, with which every dispassionate and candid mind will receive injurious reports against one, whom every tongue is employed to calumniate, and every hand to blacken. Granting every idle story to be true, who asks such questions as these, *Can any good thing come from THOMAS PAINE? Is not this the STAY-MAKER?* who asks *these* questions, I say, but *Nazarenes?* A philosopher, and a genuine lover of truth, but above all a Christian, who professes himself the disciple of a carpenter's son, considers the argument alone; and will disdain to embroil a political question with the personal character of the author. In my opinion, there cannot be a stronger presumptive proof, that a reasoner of this sort, who is like *Mr. Hey* a man of real understanding, has either some interest in defending the reigning corruptions, or feels the arguments of his adversary to be incapable of confutation. I would recommend a view of the condition of the common people, especially in the metropolis, to these soothing advisers of acquiescence to the established system; and then let him ask himself, if these are the fruits of a free government, if these are the symptoms of a happy constitution. None of your *sophistical soporifics* for me!

incom-

incommunicable exasperations, that convey the sharpest wounds to a generous spirit, but are obvious only to *spectators**:—then turn your eyes to a series of harsher sufferings; and observe him more than once in danger of being stoned on the spot by an enraged populace, and compelled to conceal himself from their resentment; and this only for attempting to remove their prejudices and lead them to an acknowledgement of salutary truth, attested by numerous acts of supernatural benevolence:—finally, observe the scoffs and ridicule, the bitterness of insult, the brutality of usage, which the fruitful malignity of triumphant enemies, both aliens and countrymen, lavisht on him after his apprehension by the *Jewish* officers:—but, above all, contemplate the taunting pleasantries of those monsters of inhumanity, the *rabbies* and the *clergy*, the *chief priests* and *scribes*, over this innocent victim of their malice, agonizing, as he then was, with the unspeakable tortures of the cross:—then, after such survey,

* Πολλά γὰρ αὖ ποιήσειν ὁ τυπτών, (and we may add ὁ ἐπη-
ριάζων) — ὡς ὁ παθὼν ἵνα μὴ αὖ ἀπαγγεῖλαι δυνατὸν ἴτερον, τῷ σχη-
ματι, τῷ βλεμματι, τῇ φωνῇ. — Ταῦτα κινεῖ, ταῦτα ἐξίτησιν ἀνθρώπων
αἰσίων. *Demosthenes in Midiam.*—And the author of the
Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 36. does not scruple to rank
cruel mockings among the most serious persecutions, by
which humanity can be assailed.

let the dispassionate examiner of this scene of suffering bring the matter home to his own bosom, and candidly ask himself, what *his* sensations would have been in the same circumstances of unprovoked and unrelenting persecution—what his reflections in the midst of such indignities and cruelties in return for *such* a conduct? Surely, without any violation of candour, without any irrational partiality for a favourite character, I may presume to answer for our supposed arbiter, that *some* emotions of *venation* and *resentment*,—*some* symptoms of *human passion*, would have rebelled in *his* breast, conscious to itself of every generous and meritorious affection, every intention of benevolence and good-will to the whole human race*. At least, one may almost venture to pronounce decisively, that the predominant sensations of *his* soul would *not* have been such a calm composition of kindness, complacency, resignation, compassion, and forgiveness: nor would *his* lips have found leisure, in such agonies of body and perturbation of spirit, to present a pe-

* This hypothesis will receive some illustration from the case of the apostle *Paul*, as related by his companion *Luke* in *Acts* xxiii. 3.—*Pausanias*, iv. 11. has a just remark : Ἀπορία τοῖς Δαιδαίμονοις καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἡδὴ καὶ οὐκ ᾔσθηται ἀφύπναις δι' ὅτι οἱ ἄνθρωποι μάλιστα ἔχουσιν ἀκρατῶς τὰ παρ' αἰσῶν.

tion to the throne of mercy for his malignant and unfeeling murderers: FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO*.

That *Græcian* virtue may not be defrauded of her deserved praise, impartiality demands the production of a little piece of history from *Ælian*, which will certainly be acceptable to every reader†.

“*Phocion*, the son of *Phocus*, who had often been commander in chief, was condemned to death, and was going to drink the hemlock in prison. When the officer held out the cup, his friends askt him, whether he had any thing

* Luke xxiii. 34. It may be no unentertaining addition to this remark, if I bring forwards a specimen of very different deportment in circumstances not dissimilar. From *Lysias*, for example, in his oration against *Agoratus*, p. 469. edit. Reiske. Εὐαριστος δὲ—καὶ. “In the presence of my sister, *Dionusodorus* at the point of death was settling his private affairs, and saying of this *Agoratus*, that he was the cause of his death, and charging me and this *Dionysius* his brother and all his friends, to AVENGE him on *Agoratus*; and charged also his wife, supposed to be then pregnant, to tell the child, that *Agoratus* slew his father, and to order him to take vengeance on the man as a murderer.”

† Var. hist. xii. 49. where *Perizonius* observes, that *Plutarch* also has recorded in his *apothegms* this answer of *Phocion*.

“ to

"to say to his son. Yes, said he; *I charge him*
"to entertain NO RESENTMENT against the Athe-
"nians for this pledge of their good-will, which I
"am going to drink." Now whosoever does not
 extol and admire the man exceedingly, ap-
 pears to me destitute of understanding and sen-
 sibility; says my author.

The *protomartyr Stephen** had so learned *this*
 lesson also of his master as to *practice* it in his
 turn with complete efficiency. *He knelt down and*
cried with a loud voice: Lord! LAY NOT THIS
SIN TO THEIR CHARGE! And, on saying this, he
fell asleep.

REMARK XVII.

THE influence of long and early associations
 upon the mind unavoidably produces *some* degree
 of attachment to our *native country*: but a mere
local affection seems, in the eye of abstract philo-
 sophy, entitled to no praise, and indeed rather
 incompatible with true dignity of sentiment. The
 regard which the great exemplar of wisdom† in

* Acts vii. 60.

† ——— quid virtus et quid SAPIENTIA possit
 Utile proposuit nobis EXEMPLAR ULYSSEM.

Horat.

the

the records of antiquity expresses for *his* native island, appears, as with most other men, a compound of good sense and weakness. "My *Ithaca*," says *Ulysses*, "is rough and barren, but an excellent nurse of men: nor have I seen in all my wanderings a more delicious country*."

Our Saviour betrayed no symptoms of irrational attachment or unmanly prejudice in this respect, but acted up to the perfect standard of wisdom and magnanimity. His conduct, ever uniformly noble, may be compared not unfitly to the texture of his own vestment; *without seam, woven from the top throughout*†. At all times, and in every

* Od. I. 27.

Τρηχὴ, ἀλλ' ἀγαθὴ κυροῖροφῶσι γαῖα
Ἡς γαῖης δυναμαὶ γλυκερώτερον ἄλλο ἰδοῖται.

*Low lies our isle, yet blest in fruitful stores;
Strong are her sons, though rocky are her shores.*

Pope.

† John xix. 23. woven for him, no doubt, by the tender solicitude of his mother, or the fond hands of some of the female disciples, who attended him.

— nec te tua funera MATER
Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
VESTE tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque
Urgebam, et telâ curas solabar aniles.

Virg. Æn. ix.

Nor

every instance, an antecedent and innate regard for *worth* and *virtue* superseded every consideration of private connection with *place* or *person*, and called forth his testimony of unreserved commendation.

The *Roman* centurion, though of a country and a class of men most unfriendly to the *Jews*, (a nation inferior to none in their love of *liberty* and their veneration for *democratic* principles) displayed a conviction of our Lord's supernatural abilities, highly observable and eminently meritorious; a conviction, which seemed to pour consolation and refreshment on the spirit of *Jesus*, wearied out by the perversity and obduracy and malice of his countrymen. His feelings broke out on this occasion in the warm language of applause and admiration: *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And*

*Nor did thy mother close thy eyes in death,
Compose thy limbs, nor catch thy parting breath;
Nor bathe thy gaping wounds, nor cleanse the gore,
Nor throw the rich embroider'd mantle o'er;
The work that charm'd the cares of age away,
My task all night, my labour all the day:
The robe I wove, thy absence to sustain;
For thee, my child!—but wove alas! in vain.*

PITT.

I say

I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.*

To those but slenderly acquainted with *Jewish antiquities*, the inveterate antipathy of this people and the *Samaritans* to each other must be well known. Sufficient proofs indeed of this enmity may be discovered in the *gospel history* itself. Even two of our Lord's disciples, *James* and *John*, had profited so imperfectly by the benevolent precepts, the gentle dispositions, the kind actions, the complacent forbearing spirit, of their master, as to express an eagerness to call down *fire from heaven*† upon a village of *Samaritans*, who refused to entertain them.—And, on another occasion, the same disciples could not dissemble their astonishment, that *Jesus* should continue talking with a woman of *Samaria*: nor does the woman herself appear to have been less surprised; for we are told by the *evangelist*, that the *Jews* had no dealings with the *Samaritans*‡; and that the woman said, *Why dost thou, who art a Jew, ask water of me, who am a Samaritan?*

* Matt. viii. 10—13.

† Luke ix. 54.

‡ John iv. 9.

Yet in opposition to this hereditary and deep-rooted aversion to each other, imbibed with life and confirmed by education, our Saviour not only endeavours by animated rebuke*, by expostulation, and an express parable† to this purpose, to rouse the shame, to soften the animosity, and to enlarge the conceptions of his followers: but seizes with avidity, as it should seem, every opportunity of placing the *Samaritans* in the most favourable point of view, by a direct contrast with the behaviour of his countrymen. *Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.* And he, we are informed, was a *Samaritan*‡.

But notwithstanding this elevation of soul, which lookt beyond the low attractions of casual connection to the wide range of *universal philanthropy*; that pure and active flame, which warms and animates the feelings of a genuine *PATRIOT*, was not unkindled in the breast of the founder of the gospel. Nay, *Jesus* manifested even that unequivocal symptom of affection for his country, that demonstration of patriotical solicitude, which the sublime satyrist considers as the noblest proof

* Luke ix. 55.

† Luke x. 30.

‡ Luke xvii. 16—19.

of the characteristical sensations of humanity*. His agony of soul, excited by the melancholy prospect of the impending desolations of *Judea* and the destruction of that city, which was the residence of *Jehovah* and the glory of the earth, could find no relief but in a flood of tears†; succeeded by this most tender and impassioned apostrophe: *O! Ferusalem! Ferusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not‡.*

We may observe also in passing, his perfect superiority to every suggestion of pride, passion, and resentment, in thus commiserating a city, which had exercised towards him such contumely, such injury, and ingratitude in former instances; and, as he well knew, would in a few days, with an accumulation of insult and cruelty, consummate their malignity by nailing him to a cross.

* Juv. Sat. xv. 131.

————— *mollissima corda*
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quæ lachrymas dedit: hæc nostri pars optima sensûs.

† Luke xix. 41.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 37.

Nor would an advocate for the supreme excellence of our Lord's character hold himself justified in letting slip so fair an occasion of inculcating, how great an accession of lustre it receives from this melting sympathy of disposition, exemplified also in other junctures of his life*. That entertaining and useful compiler *Suidas* has preserved for us an excellent *hemistich* of an unknown writer to this effect :

————— ἀγαθοὶ δ' ἀριδακρυεῖς ἄνδρες.

'Tis a sure sign of WORTH to melt in TEARS.

It is, therefore, with perfect propriety and from a just insight into truth and nature, that *Lycophron* has aggravated an odious character from this topic † :

*Hard wretch! of brow austere, by smiles unbent,
BY TEARS UNWET; estrang'd alike from both.*

Let the reader, therefore, determine for himself, whether the account, which *Porphry*‡ has

* See my *Silva Critica*, part ii. sect. xcvi.

† ————— ὃ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀπαιχθισμοῦ

καὶ δακρυῶν τῆς δ' ἑστὶ καὶ τῆς αἰσθητικῆς

ἀμφοῖν. *Cassand.* vers. 117.

‡ *Vit. Pythag.* sect. 35. edit. Kuster.

delivered of his hero *Pythagoras*, be in this respect so creditable as the biographer, no doubt, supposed, to that truly great and venerable philosopher; in my opinion, the most illustrious personage of *heathen antiquity*, that has come down to our knowledge.

“ His soul also, conformable to the invariable
 “ temperature of his bodily appearance and con-
 “ stitution, bespoke always the uniformity of his
 “ manners and affections from his countenance.
 “ For neither did it receive any diffusion from
 “ PLEASURE, nor contraction from UNEASINESS;
 “ nor was he ever discovered under any agitation
 “ of JOY or SORROW. No man saw him at any
 “ time EITHER SMILE OR WEEP.”

Our moral poet declares his sentiments in more commendable strains:

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast,

Their virtue fix'd; 'tis fix'd as in a frost*.

But

* *Pope's Essay on Man*.—*Dr. John Jebb*, lost alas! too soon to his friends, to his country, and mankind! thus expresses himself, in his sermon on *the Excellency of the Spirit of Benevolence*, with a pathos beyond all praise, and highly symptomatic of his own tenderness and sensibility.

“ Glory not in the ferocity of thy nature: nor steel it
 “ against the soft sensations of pity and compassion.
 “ Better for thyself, as well as others, that thy heart should

But the disinterested magnanimity of the PATRIOT beamed forth with a lustre still more conspicuous at a time, when the sensations of humanity, without endangering an imputation of selfishness and degeneracy, might have been pardonably absorbed in the solitary contemplation of it's own

"overflow with the milk of human kindness; better that
 "thou shouldest melt at every tale of woe;—than possess
 "that unfeeling temper, which forbids thee to rejoice
 "when thou hearest the voice of gladness; or withhold
 "thy TEARS amidst the distresses of a creature of like pas-
 "sions with thyself."

Nor can I deny myself the pleasure, notwithstanding the tediousness of transcription, to communicate some elegant criticisms of *Eustathius* to the reader: in *Iliad*. p. 87. edit. Bas.

Συμπάθεις οἱ ἥρωες παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ, καὶ ἱτοιμὸν δακρυῖς· καὶ ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν ἦθος τὸ τοιοῦτον παραστατικόν.—The poet's heroes are full of sympathy, and prone to weeping, which is a symptom of good dispositions. He then subjoins various proofs of his assertion from *Homer*, and adds: Καὶ ἄλλως δὲ, ὡς φασιν οἱ παλαιοί, ὅτε καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἄνθρωποι—δακρυῖ· ὃ γὰρ ἀπάθος ὁ σπουδαῖος, ἀλλὰ μετριοπαθής.—Οὐ μὲν τοι παρὰ τῷ Σοφοκλεῖ Αἴας, ὅτε ἐπὶ τοῖς μεγάλαις τῷ κακῷ, ἰδακρυῖ· ἐμβριθὲς γὰρ ἐκεῖνος, καὶ μεγαλοδύμη, καὶ μανίας ὄντης. Besides, as ancient critics have observed, it is no strange thing if Achilles weeps; for the good man is not unfeeling, but of mild affections.—Yet Ajax in Sophocles did not weep even at the greatest misfortunes: for he was violent, of a haughty spirit, and bordering upon madness.

Hominis est enim affici dolore, sentire, resistere tamēn, et solatia admittere; non, solatiis non egerē. Plin. c. iat. viii. 17.

absorbed

calamities*. But *Jesus of Nazareth* felt and thought, spake and acted, lived and died, for the good of OTHERS†. His heart, which was truly *human*‡, sympathizing with *all* the concerns of his fellow-creatures§, and only ceasing it's benevolent sensations with existence, was *tremblingly alive* to the interests of his *country*. His own sufferings, exquisite as they were, and whatever commiseration they might excite in others, could not seduce his attention for a single moment from what was to him a

* The judgement of the most finished poet in the universe has made a very apposite use of this topic in his incomparable description of the *plague among the beasts*:

Non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum,

Nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat: ACRIOR illum

CURA domat.

VIRGIL'S GEORG. iii. 537.

Aristotle, rhet. ii. 8. points out the topic with his customary perspicacity. Μητ' αυ φοβουμενοι σφοδρα· α γαρ λεγουσι οτι εκπληθυμενοι, δια το ειναι προ· τη οικειη παθει.

In this view, our Lord's attention to his disciples during his own dreadful conflict between *fear* and *duty*, is strongly commendatory of a benevolent and disinterested heart. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* Matt. xxvi. 41.

† Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

LUCAN. ii. 383.

‡ Heb. ii. 17.

§ Homo sum; humani nihil à me alienum puto.

TERENCE.

more

more momentous object. Amidst the wailings and lamentations of the surrounding multitude*, the mind of *Jesus* continues unshaken and serene, vacant to the operations of every finer feeling of benevolence; neglectful of itself, and wholly engrossed by the tenderest solicitude for the welfare of his countrymen. Worthy indeed of so divine a character was that pathetic address, (pathetic beyond all example, and fatally predictive!) of this dying patriot!

Daughters of Jerusalem! weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold! the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs

* This part of the gospel narrative holds forth a prominent feature of authenticity, in signaling the lamentations of the women on this occasion: *Sophocles* in his *Ajax* truly says:

καρτα τοι φιλοκτιστον γυνη.

Most prone to pity is the FEMALE BREAST.

And the same most noble writer dwells with circumstantial description on the supposed sorrow of the mother of *Ajax* upon hearing the news of that hero's death,

Η πε ταλαινα, τηδ' οταν κλυη φαινη,

Ησσι μεγαλιν κωκυτον εν παση πολει: v. 866.

*When she my sad catastrophe shall know,
The streets will ring with shrieks of frantic woe.*

In this view, Matt. xxvii. 55, 61, to which I refer, will appear extremely natural,

that

that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck*!

In connection with the foregoing illustrations, some further positions of the incomparably sagacious philosopher of *Stagyra*, whom we have before called to our assistance, will contribute to display the vast superiority of our *Saviour's* affections above the movements of vulgar minds. "Those, whose situation is entirely desperate and irretrievably calamitous," says this comprehensive speculator of human manners†, "are not inclined to *commiseration*, which has always a tacit reference to the possibility of similar suffering, contemplated in others, to ourselves: for they have already proceeded to the extremity of misfortune."

But this position, however applicable to the generality of mankind, was not realized in the the conduct of our Lord. Though on his road to *Calvary*, and certain of speedy crucifixion, his sensations of social benevolence and compassion

* Luke xxiii. 28, 29.

Of the same nature, and equally illustrative of our Lord's compassionate disposition, is that beautiful apostrophe, Matt. xxiv. 19. *But alas! for them that are with child, and them that give suck, in those days!*

† Rhetoric, lib. ii. cap. 8.

were

were alive in unabated vigour. Even then, in that sad hour of personal affliction, which filled up the measure of *mortal sufferance*; he transferred his eyes from the scene of present calamity to the future miseries of his countrymen. *Daughters of Ferusalem! weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

Again: when we consider our Lord's situation in another view, as detached from many of the most endearing ties of *domestic connection* and *consanguinity*, a subsequent remark of the consummate *rhetorician* will conduce to recommend the character of our hero: for these ties are the great handmaids of pity and compassion.

"They also, who have parents, or *children*,
"or *wives*, are inclined to pity; for these are a
"man's own, and are liable to suffer misfortunes."

REMARK XVIII.

THE *friendship* also, which our divine master entertained for his disciple *John*, is a topic too important to be entirely overlooked in this attempt to exhibit the excellencies of his character*.

* Αλλ' ἐστὶ δὴ τις ἄλλος ἢ βροτοῖς ἔρως,

Τυχὴς διαίας, σωφρονέει, καὶ γὰρ. Euripides.

The race of man another love controuls,

The love refin'd of pure and virtuous souls.

However excursive the range of benevolence may be, embracing with extended regards every object of rational, and even irrational, creation; still she will require some fond bosom, as the repository of congenial sentiments, as the asylum from the perturbations of the world, as the pillow for her head, languishing with the sorrows and oppressions of mortality. The general sense of mankind has universally concurred in approving those generous spirits, that have distinguished themselves among their species by the ardour and fidelity of *friendship*. Let the union of *John* and *Jesus* be hereafter celebrated among those illustrious pairs, who have descended with such encomiums down the stream of time from the earliest antiquity to these late ages of the world. This pattern of pure *christian friendship**, (and much does it redound, I think, to the honour of our *evangelist* to have harmonized in congenial affections with such a spotless heart!) this pattern, I say, of true *christian friendship*, were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths, though divided in body, yet, in spirit and the continuity of love, they were still united through the medium of an object equally endeared to them both. *Jesus* seeing his mother†, and the disciple whom he loved, standing

* John xiii. 23.—xxi. 20.

† John xix. 26, 27.

by the cross, active as ever to beneficence and tenderness in the midst of torture! saith unto his mother: Woman! behold thy son. Then he saith to the disciple: Behold! thy mother. And from that very hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Such is the alliance between *true wisdom* and *unsophisticated nature*, that the *gospel* exhibits, but with additional incentives to attachment and perseverance, the same affections which actuated the bosom of virtue in the early days of primitive simplicity, or the later æra of philosophical refinement. For the proper office of philosophy consists in rectifying the deviations of the mind from its original rule of right, and in rekindling those sparks of *intellect* and *virtue*, which the oppressions of depraved habit, the smother of false knowledge, and the mists of artificial manners, have conspired to obscure. In this view, even the dispensation of the GOSPEL itself, which is stiled in *scripture* a **RESTITUTION*** of things—a *reconciliation*† of the *alienated affections* of *relatives* and *friends*—may be regarded in some respect (but in connection

* Acts iii. 21. Matthew xvii. 11.

† Luke i. 17. Malachi iv. 6.

*Nor think in nature's state they blindly trod,
The state of nature was the reign of God.*

POPE.

with

with an indubitable ascertainment of immortality by the obedience of *Christ* unto death) as a *republication* of the LAW of nature—as the mean of restoration to the primæval purity of patriarchal manners, exhibited in the early periods of the *Mosaic* history; the memory of which was preserved by tradition among all the posterity of *Adam*, and consigned to written records, as men emerged from barbarism, in the memorials of the golden age.

An excellent passage from *Themistius* shall close the observation of this *Section* *.

“For these reasons I have enlarged on this topic. I suspect, that you are laughing at the philosophers, and think of them with disrespect, when ye see them fondly attached to their sons and daughters, like other men. I must tell you, therefore, that these very feelings are of the essence of philosophy; and, as far as they actuate the breasts of others, are derived from no other source, inasmuch as Nature hath implanted in every man some elementary principles of philosophy †.”

REMARK.

* Orat. xxxii.

† It forms one of the most amiable traits in the character of *Sir Isaac Newton*, who was indeed all-accomplished beyond

REMARK XIX.

I HOLD it to be an indisputable proposition, that the grand object of all the dispensations of God's providence towards the inhabitants of the earth, is their consummation in purity and virtue—the reillumination of the *dim* and *marred* visage of debased man to the brightness of his own celestial countenance, reflected in full lustre upon

yond any of his species, that he was fond of *little children*, and delighted to see them playing about his study. Such was the simplicity, the sweetness, the condescension of a mind, that could expatiate through the universe,

And pass the flaming bounds of place and time!

resembling in this respect also the affectionate tenderness of the Nazarene; who fondled *little children* in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and recommended their innocent and artless manners to the imitation of his disciples.—And yet (that I may lose no opportunity of shaming corrupted Churches, which make and love and believe a LIE (2 Thess. ii. 11. Revel. xx. 15.) and of disgracing antichristian principles, wherever I discover them) these very infants are strenuously maintained by *sound divines*, the spiritual pastors and teachers of this goodly land! to be CHILDREN OF WRATH and BORN IN SIN, 'till the hallowed drops from their *disinterested* fingers have purged away the defilements of nativity, and made the creature fit for the acceptance of its Creator!!!

the

the votaries of the gospel from the *face of Jesus Christ**. All that the Creator has required of his creatures in every period of time is a conformity to the dictates of their consciences, and an observance of the rules of rectitude commensurate to the respective portions of their knowledge. It is highly honourable to the *christian* system, as laid down both by *Jesus* and his *apostles*, that purity of heart and active virtue are set forth by them as the criterion of merit and the condition of divine acceptance. Kind affections and beneficent exertions are the *sacrifices*, with which God is pleased. Frivolous oblations, tedious ceremonies†, canting prayers, with all the trumpery of your *superstitious mummers* and *creed-mongers* of the *churches*, are excluded from the temple of gospel worship, whose foundation and superstructure are in the heart—whose pillars are *confidence*‡ in heaven—whose materials are *good-works*—whose *builder* and *contriver* is God him-

* 2 Cor. iv. 6. iii. 18.

† When our Saviour came into the world, the religion of the greatest part of it ran out into a multitude of little rites, weak observances, bodily postures; and he appoints a religion directly opposite; plain, simple, rational, life and spirit; whose main design was to employ and perfect the mind and spirit of a man. *Spencer on Prodigies*.

‡ *πίστις*—*faith*—*reliance* upon God.

■

self.

self. *He, that hath my commandments, saith our Lord, and keepeth them; HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME**. And his favourite apostle: *In this we know, that we have a knowledge of God, if we keep his commandments†*.

Now, according to my apprehension, as a contrary doctrine would have been highly derogatory to the *gospel*, it is not only no trivial recommendation of the *Christain* doctrines and the character of their preacher, to agree so harmoniously with the sentiments and positions of undepraved Reason, as she addresses these later ages through the mouths of the great and good, the venerable philosophers of *Greece* and *Rome*; but constitutes moreover with me a satisfactory demonstration of the pure *antichristianism* of the present *establishments* of religion, and the modes, generally prevalent among us, of practising and inculcating the faith of *Jesus*. All is ostentation, ceremony, commutation, and filthy lucre! Nay, the majority of modern professing *Christians* have been persuaded, that the *Father* of mankind, who ran to

* John xiv. 21.

† 1 Epist. ii. 3. and many other places. Compare also with respect to the reasoning of this article Rom. ii. 13—16. which is adverted to below.

meet his repentant son, when *a long way off**, could not possibly deliver from *perdition* the children, who so strikingly resembled his own perfections; such as *Socrates*, *Plato*, and all the luminaries of *Gentile* virtue. But, what is still more worthy of admiration! our own Church† has the *audacity* (the *impiety* I should

* Luke xv. 20. We have been lately furnished with another decisive proof of the correspondence of our *ecclesiastical establishment* and the spirit of our *rulers* with the meekness and gentleness of *Christianity*. The *King's proclamation* calls upon us to confess our sins and implore the protection of the *Almighty*, when we are fitting out *fleets* and *armies* for the murder of his creatures; as if the *shedding of human blood* in company with a confederacy of *royal butchers* characterised the disciples of THE PRINCE OF PEACE. What are common blasphemies and ordinary murders in competition with such transcendant enormities as this?

When we consider the conduct of *Great-Britain* in the *East* and *West-Indies*, in the *Slave-Trade*, and in the laws at home, so peculiarly adapted to corrupt and debase the manners of the people; and all this under a pretension of *reformed religion*, and a *happy constitution*;—certainly the national guilt of no great empire since the creation of the world, if knowledge and opportunity be taken into the account, was at all comparable to our own. Yet we can talk of *French profligacy* and *French atheism*! as if *corrupt Christianity* had not much to reform before it arrives at that limit of neutrality, where we place the *French*.

† In the *thirteenth Article of Religion*.

have said) to require all her sons to depose before God on oath, in the very teeth of our *Saviour** and *St. Paul*, that the GOOD WORKS of heathens are *not PLEASANT TO GOD*, but have the NATURE OF SIN!—When will the mind of man throw off this debasing bondage? When will his dormant powers start from their trance of stupefaction, and level this *hay and stubble*—this vile rubbish of ignorance and supineness, of craft and speculation—with the ground?

Happy for us *dissentients*, that we can sustain ourselves, in the interval of a patient waiting for the will of God 'till his due season, with the consolatory oracles of divine wisdom; and are able to confront with this *cœlestial armour* the unblushing dogmas of artifice and folly: conscious as we are, that *virtuous sin*, blind to the excellence of these *establishments*, is more precious in the sight of God, than all the *illuminated knavery* of *gospel-churches*. How far the good sense of antiquity gives us countenance, independant of the express testimonies of the *evangelists*, the following extract will sufficiently evince; which appears

* *And I say unto you, Many shall come from the east and west, and will sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

to me remarkably pertinent to the subject before us*.

“ *Diogenes* may be properly employed against
“ *Sophocles* also ; who hath stricken many myriads
“ of men with despondency by the following verses
“ concerning the mysteries :

“ *Thrice happy they go down into the grave,*

“ *Whose eyes have witnessed this sacred sight !*

“ *For these alone in that dread region live :*

“ *The rest immerse in darkness all, and woe.*

“ Now *Diogenes*, upon hearing something in
“ this strain : What say you ? says he. Will *Pa-*
“ *tæcian* the thief fare better, when he dies, for
“ having been initiated, than *Epaminondas* ?”

Let me be permitted to recommend also a most
admirable passage of an early *Christian father* to
the consideration of bigots and fanatics of every
denomination†; and to entreat from them, as an
edifying

* *Plutarch. de audiendis poetis, ii. 21. edit. Xylandri.*

† *Irenæus, adv. hæc. iv. 39. edit Græbe. Non enim propter eos solos, qui temporibus Tiberii Cæsaris crediderunt ei, venit CHRISTUS; nec propter eos solos, qui nunc sunt, homines, providentiam fecit Pater; sed propter omnes omnino homines, qui ab initio secundum virtutem suam in sua generatione et timuerunt et dilexerunt Deum, et justè et piè conversati sunt erga prox-*

edifying exercise of their private meditations, the comparison of *his* sentiments with those of the compilers of our *articles* and the leading *rabbies* of the *Church of England*.

“ For not merely on account of those, who
 “ believed on him in the times of Tiberius Cæsar,
 “ did Christ appear; nor did God ordain his pro-
 “ vidence for those only, who are now alive; but
 “ for all men without distinction, who from the
 “ beginning have feared and loved God accord-
 “ ing to their ability in their generation; and
 “ have conducted themselves righteously and af-
 “ fectionately towards their neighbours, and have
 “ desired to see *Christ*, and to hear his voice.
 “ Wherefore, all of this description will be first
 “ raised from sleep at his second coming, and he
 “ will restore to life as well those as the rest, who
 “ are to be judged; and will settle them in his
 “ kingdom. Inasmuch as it is the *same God*, who

imas, et concupierunt videre Christum, et audire vocem ejus. Quapropter omnes hujusmodi in secundo adventu primo de somno excitabit, et eriget tam eos, quàm reliquos qui judicabuntur; et constituet in regnum suum. Quoniam quidem unus Deus, (Rom. iii. 30.) qui patriarchas quidem direxit in dispositiones suas; justificavit autem circumcisionem ex fide et præputium per fidem. Quemadmodum enim in primis nos præfigurabamur et prænuntiabamur; sic rursus in nobis illi deformantur, hoc est, in ecclesiâ; et recipiunt mercedem pro his quæ laboraverunt.

“ directed

“ directed indeed the patriarchs into his dispensations, and *justified circumcision upon faith, and uncircumcision by faith.* For as we were prefigured and foretold in the ancients, so they, on the other hand, are completely formed in us, that is in the church; and receive a reward for their labours*.”

REMARK XX.

No trait more conspicuous in the features of our *Saviour's* character or more consonant to the previous ideas of dispassionate philosophy concerning a teacher commissioned by the gracious parent of the universe, than the *benevolent tendency of the gospel miracles.* It was, we are told by the historians, the *meat and drink* of *Jesus* to go about doing good, in imitation of that God, whose tender mercies are over all his works.

The alleviation of human misery in all it's forms, unconnected with every symptom of interest, vanity, and ambition, was the invariable end, to

* The author seems to consider the *Christian church* as a *collective body*, consummated by the joint operation of all it's members, in whatever period of time this operation may have been exerted.

which all his supernatural endowments appear to have been directed*. He refused to exhibit signs from heaven, or call down fire on the Samaritans, or pray for twelve legions of angels, to create mere astonishment and admiration, and to subserve an intemperate ambition. The few and slight objections, which the busy ingenuity of unbelievers has been able to raise in opposition to the present

* *Nusquam legimus miraculum aliquod à Christo patratum circa honores, aut pecunias; sed tantum circa corpus humanum, aut conservandum, aut sustendendum, aut personandum, Bacon de Augm. Scient. L. iv. C. 2. In the English, vol. i. p. 68. edition of 1778, and the reason may be assigned in the words of Alexander the Aristotelian, apud Cyril. contra Julianum. lib. iv. p. 132. Ἰδοὺ γὰρ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐφικτοῦ. for it is the peculiar property of every good being to confer benefits.*

The recognitions of Clement, lib. iii. sect. 59, 60. furnish some good observations on this topic in favour of the gospel miracles. *Ille, qui à malo est, &c.* "He, that is from the evil one, shews signs of no profit to any man; but the actions of a good messenger are serviceable to all. For tell me, I pray, what is the use of making statues walk; dogs, of brass or marble, bark; mountains dance, and fly through the air, which ye say Simon Magus did? But what proceeds from a good man has respect to the welfare of mankind: like the actions of our Lord; who made the blind to see, the deaf to hear; set on their legs the weak and lame; drove away sicknesses and dæmons; raised up the dead."

Remark,

Remark, is of itself a noble testimony to this ingredient in the composition of our Saviour's character. The destruction of the *herd of swine* may be justly regarded, perhaps, as a *proper punishment* of their owners for keeping such animals in direct violation of the *Mosaic* institutes; and as a suitable interference in the anointed servant of the *Jehovah* of the *Hebrews*, who *came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil**.—

And even infidelity herself might blush at her noisy cavils upon the blasting of a *BARREN* fig-tree by the *WAY-SIDE*; neither an invasion of private property, nor any injury to the community at large. But the *lesson*, which this emblematic action dictated with peculiar efficacy and impression to our Lord's disciples, and now dictates to ourselves, is of the first importance to every man alive;—to the *deist*, as well as the *believer* in *revelation*. If the opportunities, which

* Cyril (lib. vi.) has preserved a curious attestation of the Emperor *Julian* to the *Christian miracles*, which will not be unacceptable to the *English* reader.

"But Jesus, having persuaded a few of the vilest of
 "your rabble, has had no fame beyond three hundred
 "years: nor did he perform during his life any work
 "worth hearing, unless a man fancies the *HEALING OF*
 "*MAIMED AND BLIND MEN*, and the exorcising of *dæmons*
 "in the villages *Bethsaida* and *Bethany* to be *MIGHTY*
 "*PERFORMANCES*."

God

God has given us for the purification of our affections and the improvement of our virtue, be neglected or misemployed;—if we be found *unfruitful* in good works, and inattentive to the promotion of human happiness in proportion to our ability; we must expect to be *withered*, like the *barren fig-tree*, before the fiery breath of his displeasure, when he cometh to judge the earth*.

REMARK XXI.

THE manner of our Lord's defence, when arraigned at the tribunal of the *high-priest*, immediately before his crucifixion, is highly consonant

* Μη γινωίτο γὰρ ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν γινῆται κατὰ τὴν ἀχαρίαν ἐκείνην οὐκην, μὴ ποτε ἔλθῃ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ τοὺς καταρασθῇ διὰ τὴν ἀχαρίαν. Cyril. Hieros. catech. i. 4. *May that of the barren fig-tree not befall us! lest Jesus, coming at any time, should curse now also on account of unfruitfulness.*

Christ whips OUR FRUITLESSNESS in the innocent fig-tree; like as the manner was among the Persians, when their great men had offended, to take their garments and beat them. JOHN HALES, ii. 51.

To the same purpose also CRAIG in his *essay on the life of Jesus Christ*, p. 48.

Omnis enim, quicumque Deo nil fertile nutrit,
Ceus sterilis truncus, lignis æquabitur ustis.

Sedulius.

to

to the general excellence of his character; a noble combination of wisdom and intrepidity, strongly declarative of conscious innocence and of high desert.

The high-priest askt Jesus concerning his disciples and his doctrine.

Jesus answered: I spake freely to the world: I have constantly taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews resort from all quarters, and in secret have I spoken nothing. Why dost thou ask me? ask my hearers what I spake unto them. Behold! they know what I said.*

It cannot indeed be affirmed with justice that such an apology is a *proof* of innocence and virtue; but we may reasonably maintain, that no innocent and virtuous person could have adopted an apology more conformable to such a character. The evidence, therefore, in favour of our Lord, is the rational evidence in the eye of philosophy, resulting naturally from the circumstances of the case.

The demeanour of *Socrates* in a similar situation, as delivered to us by his great admirer and worthy disciple, *Xenophon*†, is most happily parallel to that of *Jesus*.

* John xviii. 19—22.

† Apol. Soc. i. 2, 3. And in Mem. iv. 8. 4. the same account is delivered somewhat more at large.

“ *Hermogenes*, observing *Socrates* to discourse
 “ about every thing rather than his trial, said to
 “ him: But, *Socrates*, was it not proper for you
 “ to consider also what apology you shall make?
 “ To which he answered first: Do not I appear
 “ to you to make my apology by an attention to
 “ the whole conduct of my life? How? said *Her-*
 “ *mogenes*. By passing through life, replied he,
 “ without a single action of injustice: which I
 “ regard as the best consideration of an apology.”

There is also a striking resemblance in another
 circumstance, mentioned by *Xenophon* * concern-
 ing *Socrates*, to the account just quoted from
 the evangelist.

“ I wonder at this accusation, which *Melitus*
 “ brings against me: for at least, when I sacrificed
 “ on the common festivals and the public altars,
 “ both the rest, that were present, used to see me,
 “ and *Melitus* himself, if he had chosen it.”

It gives me pleasure to illustrate and honour, as
 far as I am able, the virtues of the great *Athenian*,
 whilst I endeavour to set forth in the proper point
 of view the character of *Christ*. The reason or
 word of God, that unchangeable and universal
 energy of heaven, which spake by various portions
 and in various manners in the days of old to the *Jew-*
ish fathers by the prophets, and in the last days by his

* Mem. i. 1—10.

beloved son*, spake also, in it's proportion, to the men of *Athens* by the mouth of *Socrates*; who may be justly deemed *a light, shining in a dark place, till the day should dawn, and the morning-stars arise in the hearts† of the Gentiles.*

REMARK XXII.

JESUS CHRIST is introduced, in several passages of his history, recommending *his own example* as a proper model for the imitation of his disciples. Such self-commendation may be, no doubt, the symptom of a weak and ignoble mind; and is in fact not unfrequently found in more immediate connection with incapacity and meanness: but, accompanied by *certain circumstances* and employed for *certain ends*, it is merely the genuine ebullition of a soul overflowing with great and generous sentiments.

"*Achilles*," says *Eustathius†*, "in thus speaking of himself, and stiling himself the best of the *Greeks*, is influenced by a sense of honour and of high desert. Now it is plain, that self-applause is not always censurable as it was in

* Heb. i. 1.

† 2 Pet. i. 19.

‡ In Il. p. 71. lib. A. upon what *Achilles* replies to *Agamemnon*.

"the

“ the case of *Astydamus*, celebrated in the proverb* ; but, on some occasions, a symptom of a high sense of honour and magnanimity ; as appears from the case of *Ajax* in *Sophocles*, and the *Philoctetes* and *Hercules* of the same Poet, and ten thousand other instances.”

A celebrated moralist of antiquity† has considered in a distinct essay, in what circumstances a man, without an imputation of impropriety, may be allowed to commend himself. It will be worth while to make an application of some of the philosopher's remarks to the conduct of our Saviour.

A consciousness of superiour merit, attended by an actual manifestation of this merit, is allowed to be one privilege for *Self-Commendation*. And surely the claim, which the moralist puts in for *Pindar*, on account of the excellences of his poetry, the christian may very pardonably advance in behalf of the multifarious and transcendant virtues of *Jesus Christ*.

Our moralist grants also, that a political character, with no insidious design of vanity and popular applause, but with an honest intention of inciting others to an emulation of his exploits,

* The proverb here alluded to is this :

Σαυτην εναντιον, ωςπερ Αστυδαμος ποτε

which see in *Suidas* with the incidents, that gave it birth.

† *Plutarch*, in his *morals*.

may

may be indulged in proclaiming his own praises. Could this candid judge have disapproved, shall we suppose, the modest exhortation of our Saviour; or rather would he not pronounce it to be the undoubted effusion of a conscious magnanimity? *Learn of me*; says this unaffected votary of true wisdom: *learn of me; for I am MEEK and LOWLY IN HEART: and ye shall find rest unto your souls**.

No suspicion surely of conceit and pride will easily suggest itself to the reader, when *humility* and *meekness* are the highest merit, which is claimed: a species of merit, for which many would not feel the smallest inclination to dispute; and which a *Greek* or *Roman* hero, and a modern bravo, would even think a degradation to the dignity of a manly character.

Self-Commendation is allowed also to be even necessary, when we are called upon to apologize for our conduct, and to repel the attack of an accuser†. Such occasions were often presented to

* Matt. xi. 29.

† *Plutarch in Themistocle*: Ἡδὲ δὲ καὶ τῶν πολιτῶν διὰ τὸ φθόνῳ ἡδὲ τὰς διὰ βόλας προσέμενον, παραγχαζέτο λυπηρῶς εἶναι, τῶν αὐτῶν πράξεων ἐν τῷ δήμῳ πολλὰκις μνημονοῦμενοι. See also *Demosthenes de coronâ*: p. 132. ed. Lutet. and the following admirable, but indirect, vindication of himself by *Epaminondas*, one of the very greatest characters of antiquity, is related also by *Cornelius Nepos*, sect. 8.—The reply, which *Scipio* gave to a tacit charge of peculation, is well known. "*It was on this day*, said he, *that I CONQUERED HANNIBAL.*"

our

our Lord by the malice of his enemies. With good reason might he say: *Which of you convinceth me of sin*?* Many good works have I shewed you from my father: for which of those works do ye stone me†?—“Such encomiums of himself,” to adopt the words of my instructive author, “not only keep clear of arrogance and self-sufficiency, but betoken an *elevated spirit* and an *exalted virtue*, that will not suffer itself to be trampled on by the foot of envy.” And to this observation he subjoins a little piece of history very pertinent to our present subject; and which, whilst it cannot fail both to entertain and instruct the reader, may serve to invalidate that plausible objection of the *Pharisees*: *Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true‡.*

“When the *Thebans* accused their General *Pelopidas* for making an irruption into the territories of the *Spartans*, and for restoring the ruined condition of *Messene*, after the expiration of his office; his abject submission and entreaties with difficulty procured his acquittal. *Epaminondas*, on the other hand, who had been his colleague in this expedition, pronounced before his Judges a magnificent panegyric of their mutual exploits, and profest himself ready to suffer death, if they would declare aloud the reasons of their condemnation; which would

* John viii. 46. † John x. 32. ‡ John viii. 13.

“ have

“ have been neither more nor less than an enu-
 “ meration of the great services performed for
 “ their country. The whole audience was stricken
 “ with admiration of his magnanimity, and in-
 “ stantly acquitted him.” I will subjoin to this
 remark another quotation from *Xenophon's Apology*
 for *Socrates*, sect. 5.

“ Can you think it strange, said *Socrates*, if even
 “ God judges it better for me to die now? Dost
 “ thou not know, that to this very time I have
 “ yielded to no man in virtue of deportment? I
 “ am conscious of the most pleasing source of
 “ satisfaction, in having passed through a life of
 “ holiness and justice: so that, whilst I felt a
 “ strong approbation of myself, I found my
 “ friends also bear the same attestation to my
 “ virtues*.”

I cannot conclude this topic more properly
 than with some exquisite observations of *De-*
mosthenes, strongly corroborative of all that has
 been alledged under the present article †.

* In my humble opinion, this ingenuous frankness is
 infinitely more laudable than the whining piety of *John*
Wesley and such men; who, at the same time that they
 think highly of themselves (and justly too) and wish all
 mankind to think highly of them, speak of themselves,
 with a stupid and false humility, as the vilest of all
 sinners.

† Περὶ συρραξίν, p. 100, ad imum. Ταῦτα δ' ἐπὶ—αἴτιον.

“ Now these things it has been your fate to execute not from any natural inferiority to your ancestors, but because they conceived nobly of themselves, and ye, O *Athenians*! have lost these sentiments. Now, in my opinion, it is not possible, that men, whose actions are trivial and mean, should be ever actuated by great and spirited ideas; nor, on the other hand, that THE AUTHORS OF ILLUSTRIOUS AND HONOURABLE EXPLOITS SHOULD IMBIBE MEAN AND GROV'LING SENTIMENTS: for correspondent to their pursuits, of necessity will the conceptions of all men be.”

REMARK XXIII.

AN extraordinary penetration of intellect, and a deep insight into the recesses of the human heart, were never more decisively demonstrated than by the following observations, both of the same tendency.

Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast.*

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now†.

* Matt. ix. 15. † John xvi. 12.

The sudden transitions, here disapproved, are neither authorised as prudent by the decisions of experience, nor adapted in themselves to the production of beneficial and permanent effects. The instantaneous transformation of *Demea* in the comedy from a *parsimonious churl* to a *gay and liberal and affable old-fellow*, I could never esteem but as a most unnatural representation of life and manners*. A much truer picture of humanity is presented to us in the character of *Hazael* by the unaffected penman of the *Jewish* history. Whilst the prophet was enumerating to the *Syrian* messenger some shocking instances of his future cruelty, his heart revolted with horror from the very idea of such enormities; and compelled him to exclaim: *But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing*†? An access to the height either of vice or virtue must be gradually progressive, and was never yet accomplished by a single step‡. *The path of the just,*

* Agreeably to the just precept of *Aristotle*: poet. cap. xkviii. Κάτ' γὰρ ἀνῳμαλὸς τις ἢ, ὁμοῦς ὁμαλῶς ἀνῳμαλὸν δεῖ εἶναι.

† 2 Kings viii. 13.

‡ Εὖτε τις λογὸν τὰν Ἀπίλλαν δαίμων

Δυσσάμβολος ἐπὶ πύρραις.—κλδ. Simonides.

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus. Juvenal.

No man e'er reacht the heights of vice at once.

just, says Solomon, is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Pursuant to the intrinsic wisdom of these maxims, founded on the immoveable basis of experience and philosophy, our Lord connived at many prejudices of his disciples, and treated their infirmities of mind, and prepossessions of education, with invariable indulgence. He removed every obstruction to their improvement with a gentle and patient hand; by converting even the most minute and incidental occurrences into so many useful lessons of morality; and by introducing, with assiduous attention and reiterated efforts, the grand truths of his religion into their minds, by the most artful indirect address, and every effort of winning insinuation. He knew the dangerous warfare, in which they were going to be engaged; he knew, that nothing but lenient discipline, and an easy transition from truth to truth, trial to trial, in orderly succession, could enable them to withstand effectually the rough encounter of that *evil*

See to this purpose some excellent observations in *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* 111. 2. a book, which, as a rational useful and learned publication, has seen, in my opinion, no superior since the revival of learning in *Europe*. Lord *Barrington*, in his *fourth* essay of the *second* volume of his *Miscellanea Sacra*, pays our learned divine a very handsome and deserved compliment.

day

day which was approaching. And this method of procedure, though abundantly recommended by it's own independent wisdom, received a full confirmation of it's propriety in the event itself. These simple *Galileans*, so rude and timid and inexperienced at first, gave full proof of the excellence of that preceptor, at whose feet they had been lectured, and by whose example they had been trained up, in a fortitude and perseverance unsubdued by sufferings, and undismayed by death.

Such consummate prudence, such reach of foresight, we see, was contained in that reply of our blessed Saviour to the question of *John's* disciples: *Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not *?* In corroboration of these speculations, I shall stay to produce some authorities on so important a topic, equally just and entertaining.

“ We can never do more injury to truth, than
 “ by discovering too much of it on some occa-
 “ sions. 'Tis the same with understandings as
 “ with eyes: to such a certain size and make just
 “ so much light is necessary, and no more. What-
 “ ever is beyond, brings confusion †.

Fuller, in his usually quaint but sensible manner, thus expresses himself on this point †.

* Matt. ix. 14.

* Shaftsbury's Charact. i. Treatise ii. Sect. 2.

† Church History, v. 3. 31.

“ Some zealots of our age will condemn the
 “ *Laodicean* temper (alluding to Rev. iii. 16.) of
 “ the *protestant bishops*, because—they might have
 “ set forth a more pure and perfect religion.
 “ Such men see the *faults* of reformers, but not
 “ the *difficulties* of reformation.—The generality
 “ of the people, being misled in ignorance and
 “ superstition, could not on a sudden endure the
 “ extremity of an absolute reformation. Should
 “ our eyes be instantly posted out of midnight
 “ into noon-day, certainly we should be blinded
 “ with the suddenness and excellency of the
 “ lustre thereof. Nature, therefore, hath wisely
 “ provided the twilight as a bridge, by degrees to
 “ pass us from darkness to light. Yea, our Sa-
 “ viour himself did at the first connive at the
 “ carnality of his *apostles*, and would not *put new*
 “ *wine into old bottles*, for fear of breaking. Yea,
 “ he had some commandments, which as yet they
 “ were *not able to bear*.—Thus the best of artists
 “ do not always work to the height of their own
 “ skill, but according to the capacity of the sub-
 “ ject, whereon they employ themselves*.”

* The reader, who is so disposed, may see some further
 remarks to the same purport in p. 27. of my *address to the*
clergy, prefixed to my *enquiry into the opinions of the early*
Christian writers concerning the person of Christ: and at p. 11.
 of my *treatise on public worship*, 3d edition.

REMARK

REMARK XXIV.

THE answer, returned by our Lord to the messengers of *John*, is not observable merely for the extreme delicacy of the reproof, which it conveys, but indicates a dignity of character correspondent to our previous conceptions of a divine teacher of religion*.

John the Baptist, like our Lord's own disciples, and the rest of the *Jews* without exception, appears to have entertained a most mistaken notion concerning the nature of the *Messiah's* kingdom; presuming that he intended to erect a *temporal monarchy* at *Jerusalem*, to deliver the country of *Judea* from the *Roman* yoke, and extend his victorious empire to the extremities of the earth. This messenger of the expected prophet had been

* I follow in this remark my own interpretation of *John's* message to *Jesus*, proposed some years ago in my *Commentary* on *St. Matthew*, which I believe in many respects to be entirely new, and which certainly sets this whole transaction, the fruitful parent of much criticism and debate, in a very plain, advantageous, and becoming light. A late author, however, has published a volume upon this subject, and delivers the same interpretation as *his own*. I think myself much indebted to the candour of the *Analytical Reviewers* for their intention of doing me justice on this occasion. *Matt. xi. 2—7.*

now confined in prison for some time by the command of *Herod*, where the reputation of our Saviour's mighty works had reached him, and excited no little astonishment, that such a personage, exhibiting such undeniable testimonials of a heavenly commission, should suffer his forerunner to languish and die in captivity without redress. Full of these erroneous ideas, he sends two of his disciples to *Jesus*, with a message declaratory of his entire persuasion, that he was the *Christ* promised by the prophecies to their fathers; and that every expectation on this head was accomplished in his person. *Thou art he who was to come: Can we expect another*?*

Our Lord dived immediately into the whole tendency of this message, and gave a reply, than which, I think, nothing more beautiful and striking can easily be conceived.

He began with healing in the presence of *John's* messengers a variety of diseased people, who had been brought to him for that purpose; and *to many that were blind he gave sight*†. A sufficient proof this! of the benevolent and salutary nature of his commission:—that he was not come, like the *military murderers* of ancient and modern times, to *destroy* men's lives, but to *save* them. Go, says

* Matt. xi. 3.

† Luke vii. 21.

this champion of love and truth; go, and shew John again those things, which ye hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

The latter parts of this answer are worthy of particular attention: *The poor have the gospel preached to them.* “The lower orders of mankind, who are treated with such indignity and contempt, as the refuse of the earth—the profane vulgar*—the cursed people†—are the more immediate

* Hor. Od. iii. 1. 1.

† See John vii. 49.

Denominated with no less emphasis of late by the right honourable EDMUND BURKE, the swinish multitude, in language as opposite to that of our Saviour, as the tempers of the Nazarene and Briton, as gentleness to rage, as sobriety to fanaticism, as tenderness to insult, as condescension to contempt, as benevolence to malignity.

There is extant a divine passage on this subject in a copious extract from a work of Diotogenes, the Pythagorean, preserved by Stobæus; which I will present to my reader.

“But we ought to carry ourselves without an overbearing insolence to all men, but ESPECIALLY to our INFERIORS in happiness and station. For they, like the sick, can endure nothing grievous. And, in observing this conduct, we shall imitate the dispositions of the gods, and especially

“ immediate objects of *my* regard and favour. *I*
 “ am not come to debase mankind—to trample
 “ on the rights and happiness of the human race—
 “ to encrease their miseries and strengthen their
 “ oppressors—but to relieve and comfort, to illu-
 “ minate and purify, to vindicate and exalt, these
 “ degraded children of a common father—these
 “ lowly sons of poverty, distress, and ignomi-
 “ ny; whom I am *not ashamed to call my bre-*
 “ *thren*.”

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in
me. “ Happy is the man, who shall be convinced
 “ of his erroneous preconceptions of the *Messiah's*
 “ character, nor feel himself scandalized at the

“ especially of the supreme ruler, *Jupiter*: for he, though
 “ so venerable for pre-eminent rank and superlative vir-
 “ tue, yet is kind, and beneficent, and a giver of good
 “ things; so as to be truly, as he is stiled by the *Ionian*
 “ poet,

“ *The genuine father both of men and gods.*”

Sedulius says very beautifully, pasch. hym. ii.

— viros ex PISCATORIBUS aptos
 Discipulos jubet esse suos; talesque supernæ
 Conciliat vitæ, quos non ventosa loquendi
 Gloria, nec vanâ de NOBILITATE superbus
 Sanguis alat, sed fama tacens humilique refulgens
 Mente nitor coelo faciat de PLEBE propinquos.

• Heb. ii. 12.

“ lowliness

“ lowliness of my office, and the insignificance of
 “ my outward station.”

This idea of the whole transaction furnishes also a most obvious, and, in my judgement, most satisfactory interpretation too of that extraordinary assertion of our Lord to his disciples, after *John's* messengers had left him.

Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he, that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.

As if he had said: “ Great as my forerunner
 “ *John* may be, and how eminent soever his rank
 “ among the *Jewish* teachers; I assure you, that
 “ the least disciple of my heavenly kingdom, which
 “ he fancies intended to resemble the kingdoms of
 “ this world—the very meanest among you all, who
 “ entertains just sentiments of my designation and
 “ the genius of that gospel, which I am preach-
 “ ing, is greater than he*.”

* I have since found the same interpretation in *Lightfoot's Horæ Hebraicæ* on this passage; and, as I read this author at an early period of my *theological* pursuits, and had been out of the way of consulting him for many years, so as to lose all recollection of any specific criticisms proposed by him; it is by no means improbable, that I originally watered my understanding from that spring, and afterwards, out of mere forgetfulness of the fountain-head, distributed this rivulet among the public as my own.

I wish

I wish the reader to observe, that our conclusions are not formed upon the strength of *one* or *two* deductions; but, we think that so *many* repeated proofs of *superiour* wisdom and *dignity of mind*, in all varieties of circumstance, in *one* character, compose a force of argument, which no stubbornness of incredulity can reasonably resist; and which might extort from *infidelity* as well as *heathenism*, the exclamation of the *Roman* soldier: TRULY THIS MAN WAS A SON OF GOD.

REMARK XXV.

AN incidental attestation in favour of our Lord, in *St. Matthew's Gospel**, is too pertinent to be passed by unnoticed.

And, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his doctrines, for he taught them as one having authority: and not as the Scribes†.

What was the mode of teaching adopted by the *Scribes*, we may collect from various passages in the *New Testament*.

* C. vii. v. 28, 29. So Mark i. 22. Luke iv. 32, to the same effect.

† Under this term the *Lawyers*, *Pharisees*, and *Sadducees* also, who composed the tribe of *Jewish* doctors and instructors, I suppose to be included.

One affection, by which they were actuated in their addresses to the people, was FEAR. They declined, for instance, to give one answer to our Saviour's question, *because they FEARED the multitude**.

Another motive, which influenced the doctrines of these people, was WORLDLY INTEREST. This appears from the charge of *rapacity* and *extortion* brought against them by our Lord†; a charge, which the state of manners among the *Jews*, as delivered down by other authors and their own countryman *Josephus*, will not allow us to consider as malicious and unfounded.

To these motives we may add, an inordinate CONCEIT of their own attainments, and an excessive VAIN-GLORY, and desire of popularity, which led them even to counterfeit *miraculous* performances without the ability of atchieving one:—all which particulars are ascertained by the *evangelical* historians‡, and other authorities beyond exception.

It is easy to suppose what impediments these unworthy motives must have thrown in the way of such preceptors in their addresses to the people; and that the corruption of their manners, exem-

* Matt. xxi. 26. Luke xx. 6.

† Matt. xxiii. 14—25.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 5—8. John vii. 49. Matt. xii. 27.

plified, no doubt, in a variety of other follies and enormities, must have incapacitated them for much moral service as teachers of religion. No heart so depraved, but admires in others that *virtue*, which itself has lost: no understanding so slender, but is able to advance the forcible apostrophe of the men of Nazareth: *Physician, heal thyself**.

Without much difficulty, therefore, may we draw our inferences from these topics in favour of our Lord. If the authority, with which he delivered his doctrines, made such an impression on the minds of his hearers, it must have arisen from those causes, which alone are capable of securing such authority to the teachers of wisdom and morality; namely, TRUTH and INNOCENCE—*veracity of pretension, and integrity of life.*

Had an ignominious *fear* of popular insult and indignation;—had any *mercenary* views of temporal interest or advancement;—had a *servile adulation*, or an arrogant *pretension* to powers not possessed,—predominated in the mind of *Jesus*, or swayed his conduct;—had his deportment in private life been degraded by vices of any kind, or his general demeanour destitute of respect;—it would have been impossible, that our Lord should have so suspended the attention, commanded the

* Luke iv. 23.

reverence,

reverence, and excited the admiration of such large bodies of the people at various times and on various occasions. Nor was the current of popular approbation ever turned against him, but by the insidious misrepresentations and clandestine management of depraved *priests* and interested *rulers*, or by their own absurd mistaken expectations concerning the nature of his character, when the vexation of disappointment converted the veneration of their capricious minds into sentiments of revenge and cruelty.

REMARK XXVI.

BUT, perhaps, a more unequivocal proof of pure intention and undisguised simplicity of heart in the *gospel historians*, and consequently of the *veracity* of their histories, is in no one circumstance more conspicuously displayed, than in the accounts which *three* of them have given of our Lord's agony at *Gethsemane*. It is not conceivable, that men of sinister purpose would represent their hero in such a state of extreme dejection, solicitude, and horror, at the prospect of approaching death; especially at an æra, when a contempt of life and a readiness to sacrifice it even by suicide, particularly to escape the ignominy of a public

lic exhibition as a criminal, however honourable it might be thought, was esteemed less honourable, than cowardice on such occasions was stigmatised as base and servile in the extreme. A relation, therefore, so little conformable to popular opinion, and so little likely to attract applause, must loudly proclaim its own authenticity to every dispassionate examiner; and the circumstances themselves, upon a closer consideration, will be found perfectly suitable to that *humanity* of constitution, that participation of all the native affections and propensities of man, which is spoken of as essential ingredients in consummating the character of the Saviour of mankind.

But the question is; "What could be the cause of our Lord's extreme distress? And what was the cup, which he besought his *Father* to remove from him?"—This proposition appears to me a point of much importance, and of no little difficulty: and has exercised my thoughts very often for a many years; nor have I been able, 'till of late, to give myself entire satisfaction on the subject. I once thought it to be *death itself*, that *Jesus* was desirous of escaping. But *death* in the cause of truth he seems to have expected from the first throughout, as an essential article of his mission: and the writer to the *Hebrews**,

* C. v. V. 7.

who expressly tells us, that his prayer was HEARD, is irreconcilable to that hypothesis. I am now convinced, that not *death itself*, but the *TORMENTING death* of the cross, was the circumstance, which appeared so formidable to his imagination, and overwhelmed him with extremity of anguish.—Let us turn a more accurate attention to this affecting subject; which, in my opinion, throws a flood of lustre on the character of Jesus, and places the veracity of the evangelists in such a luminous point of view, as will establish with abundant conviction the votaries of our religion and perplex her adversaries.

There occurs a most beautiful passage in *St. Mark*, strongly distinguished by features apparently taken off from *ocular observation*; and which, I think, no power of artifice could possibly have reached.

And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus continued GOING BEFORE THEM, and they were amazed, and followed him with fear. And he took aside the twelve again, and began to tell them what was going to befall him. “Behold! we are going up to Jerusalem; and the son of man will be delivered up to the chief-priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him up to the Gentiles, who will mock him,

"and scourge him, and spit upon him, and kill him." I

What a picture have we here of a mind haunted with a perpetual horror of approaching pain; and yet, with an impatience, arising from occasional fits of resolution so natural in such cases, eager to proceed, and anxious for a speedy termination of its sufferings! There cannot be produced, in my opinion, from any author, a more pathetic incident, or more exactly consonant to the documents of experience and the dictates of philosophy. "Some, says *Pliny*†, were lamenting their own "infelicity; others, that of their friends; some "WERE IMPLORING DEATH FROM THE MERE "TERROR OF IT." So true is that assertion of our incomparable child of nature:

present fears

Are less than HORRIBLE IMAGININGS.

And *Cæsar* has observed, that "we shall more "easily find those, who are ready to suffer death,

* C. x. V. 32—35.

† *Epist.* vi. 20. 14. Hi suum casum, illi suorum miserebantur: erant qui METU MORTIS MORTEM PRECARENTUR. See also *Dion Cassius*, frag. cxxxvi. 4. p. 57. vol. i. edit. Reimari.

"than

"than those, who can endure uneasiness and
"pain*."

We may discover also another proof of the perpetual presentation of the approaching catastrophe to his thoughts, and of the magnitude, to which his affrighted imagination had enlarged the terrific spectre.

Ye know not what ye are asking; he replies to the sons of Zebedee. Can ye drink the cup, which I am about to drink; and be baptised with the baptism, that I am going to be baptised with†?

And again: *I have a baptism to be baptised with: and HOW AM I STRAITENED, until it be accomplished‡?*

By the cup, therefore, I understand that particular excruciating death, the death of the cross§; and the assistance, which he received, represented in *St. Luke* by the appearance of an angel from heaven strengthening him,—I judge to be a recollection of his spirits, an infusion of fortitude, which determined him to a resolute submission to

* De Bell. Gall. vii. 77. Qui se ultro morti obferant, facilius reperiuntur, quam qui dolorem patienter ferunt.

† Matt. xx. 22.

‡ Luke xii. 50.

§ Mentioned with such emphasis Heb. xii. 2. Phil. ii. 8. and elsewhere, as peculiarly formidable.

His fate; a determination not a little forwarded by the nearness of the event. When his fears had been exhausted in the previous agonizing conflict between duty and apprehension, between the infirmities of the *flesh* and the willingness of the *spirit* to accomplish the will of God;—when his bodily vigour was impaired by the struggle, and now relaxed to acquiescence through a copious sweat, which flowed from his face, as *blood* issues from a wound*;—he appears again to his disciples with a calm settled magnanimity. He seems even eager for the accomplishment of his ministry, and hastens to a close of this scene of suffering. *Arise*, says he to his languishing companions; *arise; LET US BE GOING.*

The whole relation is to me inimitably majestic and affecting: the reader, however, must not judge from my inadequate delineation of it, but have recourse to the narratives themselves, which deliver the transaction with a simplicity and pathos, that cannot be exceeded.

But I forbear to enlarge on this subject of our Lord's agony, because it has been discussed with much good sense and perspicuity by my venerable friend the Rev. Timothy Wylde, late master of the

* See some observations on this account of Luke xxii. 44. in my *Silva Critica*, part 1st.

free-school in Nottingham, in a sermon preached almost sixty-three years ago at that place, upon Matt. xxvi. 39*, from which I shall quote the three reasons assigned for this extraordinary emotion of our Saviour.

1. The *first* ground of Christ's fear and agony I shall mention, is his *knowing beforehand* the particular circumstances of his torment and death.

2. Another reason of our Saviour's fear and disorder was, the *remarkable severity* of his sufferings, and the many circumstances of cruelty, with which his death was attended.

3. The only other reason I assign for our Saviour's fear of death (and what I principally rely on) is his sense of the *important consequences*, which depended on his dying well.

Thus far this intelligent preacher, who reasons on each of these propositions in a rational, convincing, and instructive manner.

REMARK XXVII.

THERE is yet one circumstance more in the history of our Saviour, to me more beautiful and

* The author is still alive, and has the full enjoyment of his intellect in extreme old age. The sermon well deserves republication.

affecting than I am able to express ; upon which indeed, such is *my* opinion of its inimitable excellence ! I would even venture to rest the whole weight of the *Christian* fabric, if I might appeal for judgement, not to the *philosophical* theorist, the cold reasoner, the dull pedant, or the conceited scoffer ; but to the ingenuous inquirer after truth—to the breast of refined sentiment—to the heart that answers at the call of nature—to purity of taste, and delicacy of feeling.

When our Lord, at his last solemn conference with the apostles, previous to his apprehension and crucifixion, expressly declared before them all, that they would forsake him that very night, and be scattered abroad like *sheep*, which had lost their *shepherd* ; *Peter*, in the warmth of attachment, was offended with such an impeachment of his fidelity and resolution. *Though they ALL forsake thee*, he replies with the eagerness of a wounded spirit ; *yet will I never forsake thee*.

The subsequent history has told us the event of these boastful and positive pretensions. It corresponded exactly to the *prediction*. This *faithful adherent*, this *intrepid champion*, this affectionate disciple of his master, not only forsook him in the hour of distress and danger, but disavowed *three* several times, with the most solemn protestations,

testations, all connection with *Jesus of Nazareth*:
I KNOW NOT THE MAN.

After our Saviour's resurrection from the grave, he appeared, we are told, to his disciples at the sea of *Tiberias**, as they were fishing. They seem, from the circumstances of the narrative, to have been sensible that it was their master, whom they saw; but their astonishment at so extraordinary an interview appears to have overpowered their inquisitiveness; and none of them ventured to say, *Who art thou?*—(For the reader must be careful to remember, that, notwithstanding the repeated and express predictions of *Jesus* to this purpose, his disciples had settled as yet in their own minds no decided conviction of his resurrection from the grave.)—He dined with them upon some fish, which they had just taken; and after dinner, as they were placed round him, absorbed in admiration and respectful silence, afraid to question, from a consciousness, it is probable, of their blameable inattention to the reiterated prediction of his own death;—this benevolent and forgiving master suddenly turns to *Peter*, and with accents of ineffable complacency and an unexampled delicacy of reproof,—*Simon! son of Jonas, says he, lovest thou me*

* *John xxi.*

more than THESE? pointing at the same time to the rest of the disciples, who were sitting by. "Thou didst indeed profess a determination to continue with me, whatever might become of them. What dost thou say now? Are then thy fidelity and thy love superiour to their's?"

Now, can the imagination of man conceive any thing more delightful and affecting than this incident? What nobler demonstration can be desired or imagined, than this gentle expostulation, of a sweet, compassionate, and forgiving temper;—of a magnanimity superiour to all animosity and resentment;—of a sympathetic consciousness of the extreme difficulty of obedience in human nature with the prospect of death before it? Could the Saviour of mankind be represented, by any contrivance of ingenuity, in a more amiable point of view? Certainly, it were impossible.—

We may figure to ourselves the confusion of the whole company on this occasion, and the peculiar perturbation and shame of *Peter*. His usual vivacity summoned, however, presence of mind sufficient for a reply; *Yea, Lord! thou knowest that I love thee.*

—Now, at this period of the transaction, let any one determine for himself, upon the maxims of experience and the ordinary operation of human feelings, whether, if he were placed in the same circum-

circumstances with our Lord, *his* answer to *Peter's* declaration of love would not have been attended with some *selfish* symptoms, some expression of *resentment*, some severity of *reproof*. But the heart of *Jesus* was thoroughly refined from the dross of all sordid and ignoble passion. *He saith unto him:* "Feed my lambs. I require no sacrifice to appease my vanity, no *public acknowledgment* of thy fault, no *abject submission*, at thy hands. I shall be satisfied with thy *future* services in return for thy *former* infidelity. Shew thy love, if not in adhering to thy rash pretension; in being at least a faithful pastor of my flock. If thou couldst forsake their *shepherd* in the hour of danger, forsake not *them*."

It seems probable, that neither *Peter* himself, nor the other disciples then present, apprehended the full force of their master's expostulation. He therefore *thrice* repeats his affecting question; *Simon! son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* alluding, with most exquisite address and pathos, to *Peter's* threefold denial of him*. This repetition produced the effect, which it were na-

* This propriety did not escape *Sedulius*, pasch. hymn. iv. fin.

Hoc terno sermone monens, ut terna negantis
Culpa recens parili numero purgata maneret.

tural to have expected from it. *Peter* at least appears to have felt the full force of this delicate appeal. He *was grieved* at the third proposal of the question; and felt desirous of putting an end to so embarrassing a conversation. *Lord!* he replies, *thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee**.

As a suitable appendage to the whole series of the preceding remarks, the following passage from *Eusebius*† appears to me worthy of presentation through the medium of this little work to the English reader.

“Those unbelievers, therefore, who stile *Jesus* a deluder and impostor, and a thousand other reproachful names, may be reasonably asked, Whether their researches have informed them of any other deceiver, who has led his deluded hearers to gentleness, moderation, sobriety, and every other virtue, by his doctrine:—whether they are authorized in stigmatizing with such atrocious epithets one, who did not allow even a

* That incident also, recorded in *Matt. xxvi. 23.* is wonderfully touching; and all the circumstances of that night breathe a spirit of melancholy grandeur, to which I know no parallel in the literary monuments of mankind,

† *Demonst. Evang. iii. 2.*

“look

“ look of lascivious design on women :—whether
 “ he could be an impostor, who delivered the
 “ perfection of philosophy, by instructing his dis-
 “ ciples to communicate their substance with the
 “ needy ; by inculcating a submission to hard-
 “ ship, and a social feeling of beneficence as of
 “ prime importance :—whether he could be an
 “ impostor, who endeavoured to withdraw man-
 “ kind from the low and promiscuous and riotous
 “ intercourse of a rabble to an application of their
 “ leisure in studying the oracles of God :—he who
 “ departed from all falsehood, and recommended
 “ truth as of superiour excellence to all other
 “ things ; who discouraged even swearing in a
 “ just cause, and much more perjury ;—how can
 “ he be justly called a deceiver ? But why need
 “ I enlarge in this place, when the tenour of his
 “ doctrines may be learned from what I have be-
 “ fore advanced ? which will incline every lover
 “ of truth to regard him, not as a deceiver, but
 “ a truly godlike man ; not as a teacher of a trite
 “ and vulgar philosophy, but of a divine and
 “ holy system ; endeavouring to revive* the pri-
 “ mitive manners, which had disappeared among
 “ mankind, of those *Hebrews* of old time, the fa-
 “ vourites of God. Such in short is the spirit of

* This idea has an agreeable correspondence with that,
 which I suggested above, p. 98,

"his *morality*. Let us now consider whether
 "the leading points of his doctrine, relative to
 "opinions, entitle him to the appellation of a
 "deceiver.
 "Is he not then described as devoting himself
 "to the only sovereign God of heaven and earth,
 "the creator of the universe; and attaching all
 "his followers to the same great being? And do
 "not the words of his doctrine to this day carry
 "up the understandings both of *Greeks* and *Bar-*
 "*barians* to the supreme God, to the disregard
 "of all visible existences? Did he not prove his
 "sincerity by disallowing the worship of a mul-
 "tiplicity of Gods to the *Gentile*, beguiled and
 "fallen in reality from the only true *theology*?—
 "Why should he not be called rather an admira-
 "ble teacher of piety than a seducer, who distri-
 "buted, through the recommendation of a divine
 "power, among all mankind, the truths known
 "only to the *Hebrews*; so that just conceptions
 "of God are no longer confined to a few, but
 "to multitudes of *Barbarians* before uncivilized,
 "as well as *Greeks*?—Or, will they call him a
 "deceiver, because he did not direct his disci-
 "ples to know God with the sacrifices of ani-
 "mals, with blood poured on altars, or vege-
 "table incense? looking upon these things as
 "low

“low and earthly, and in no wise suited to an
“immortal nature; but regarding as more ac-
“ceptable to God than any sacrifice, an upright
“observance of his commandments; by which
“he taught his disciples, through the purification
“of body and spirit, and the ornament of an un-
“sullied mind and pious opinions, a resemblance
“of the Divinity; expressly saying, *Be ye perfect,*
“*as your Father is perfect.*”

To sum up the result of the foregoing Remarks in few words. In the preceding detail of arguments, I have touched on *some* striking circumstances of our Saviour's character, which appeared to me peculiarly worthy of admiration: but the short volumes of his history will furnish many more proofs of wisdom and virtue, to those disposed to search after them; which, if my fondness for the subject does not mislead my judgment, the collective annals of our species would endeavour to parallel in vain. Every individual must be left to his own determination in this case, and undoubtedly will feel impressions peculiar to himself; impressions, unavoidably diversified by a thousand particularities, that elude conjecture, and set calculation at defiance; particularities of natural constitution, education, and

and modes of life: but let him be careful to decide without passion, without prejudice, without conceit; and to report the true verdict of his conscience. For my part, expatiated as I have through almost the whole compass of ancient literature, I declare in the most serious manner and the most unreserved language, that I perceive in the *gospels* more unequivocal marks of authenticity, than in any similar work whatsoever, *moral* or *historical*, whether of ancient or modern times:—I protest, that the very idea of their spuriousness, as a forgery of some impostor, constitutes to my mind a problem of far more difficult solution than the proposition, which it is intended to overthrow:—I believe accordingly, that the *Evangelists* must have given us, from OCULAR ATTESTATION, faithful narratives of the life and actions of JESUS CHRIST of *Nazareth*, the MESSIAH of the *Jews*, the SAVIOUR of mankind, and the beloved SON OF GOD.

REMARK XXVIII.

UPON a mature discussion of the superior advantages accruing from it, the *low condition* of life, in which *Jesus* of *Nazareth* was placed, will be found one circumstance of the *Christian* dispensation, eminently declarative of the wisdom of
it's

it's author. The great and noble are comparatively few in any nation to the general mass of the community. As, therefore, it seems unanimously agreed by *theologians*, and, in my opinion, upon principles of good sense not to be controverted, that the *example* of the anointed prophet was a point of principal importance; an inferior condition comes recommended strongly, in the first instance, by it's adaptation to the circumstances of the majority of our species.

The topic, suggested also in the epistle to the *Hebrews**, is applicable to the present proposition, and is of no secondary consequence. Elevated ranks in society†, so far removed from the wants and distresses, to which the generality of men are perpetually exposed by the vicissitudes of for-

* C. ii. v. 17, 18.

† This argument is illustrated with the customary good sense of that excellent writer *Archbishop Secker*, in the 7th Sermon of vol. 1st on 1 Cor. i. 22, 23, 24.

Juvenal has delivered a maxim pertinent to the spirit of the present disquisition: Sat. viii. 73.

*Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa
Fortuna.*

By which he means, that the favourites of fortune are usually strangers to those sympathetic affections, which extend to our common humanity, and operate in universal undistinguishing benevolence.

tune,

tune, are *not* the stations for suitable improvements in those affections, that peculiarly become humanity. A more humble sphere is the soil best fitted for the sympathetic virtues; they *open fairest* in the sequestered vale, and are seldom found to flourish, but when engrafted on the stock of *experimental suffering**. Many bright parts of our Saviour's character could never have beamed forth to enlighten the path and direct the steps of his faithful followers, had he not learned from those distresses and embarrassments, in which his condition almost unavoidably involved him, to feel for the miseries of man from their impressions on himself: nor could he have accommodated his doctrines to the world at large without an ability of entering into the affections, sentiments, and feelings of the majority of his brethren by a participation of their condition: not to mention that pre-eminent accomplishments and true nobility of character have in all ages been formed in the school of rigid discipline under the tuition of adversity; and that the hill of *Virtue*, steep of ascent and rugged in it's progress, can only be climbed by toilsome perseverance up the steps of *Sorrow*.

* Whence that of *Dido*:

Non ignara mala miseris succurrere disco.

Moreover,

Moreover, this appointment is conformable to the pretensions of an authentic revelation from the Deity in another respect. The personal influence of a subordinate member of society, destitute of secular distinctions, family attachments, and the allurements of opulence and grandeur, cannot be supposed to have gained *many* proselytes to an institution, which afforded rather a prospect of affliction, than of ease and comfort; a state of warfare more than a station of enjoyment: whereas many disciples might have been suspected, with good reason, of seduction, by favour, gratitude, or expectation, to the party of their patron and benefactor. The friends and followers of a teacher, circumstanced as *Jesus* was, will countenance no suspicion of influence from indirect and unworthy motives. In what could *their* devotion to such a master have it's origin, but in the attractions of unendowed *virtue* and the efficacy of simple *truth*?

REMARK XXVI.

THOSE characters, which exhibit themselves in the *actions*, *speeches*, and *discourses* of the various personages brought upon the stage of history, have been deemed by the most impartial and judicious critics more removed from every semblance

lance of design and artifice, and more significant of *authenticity* and real *nature*, than such as writers delineate in elaborate descriptions composed for the purpose *. In the former case, your mind is presented with the spontaneous exposition, which the naked circumstances alone deliver; in the other, you read the studied opinions of the professed author, in which can hardly fail to betray itself a propensity, inseparable from writers, to exaggerate or disparage, according to the exigencies of the particular purpose under contemplation. Indeed it is evident at the first sight, on which side of these different processes the superiority must lie with respect to the probable *authenticity* of a narrative. And, in this view, the works of *Homer*, undoubtedly the most ancient composition of *heathen* genius, deserve peculiar commendation; for in them no violation of this mode of portraying characters, if we except one or two trivial instances, can be found: an assertion,

* Expressior videatur necesse est et perfectior eorum imitatio, qui non rem gestam referunt, verum quodammodo gerunt ipsi atque agunt, cum dissimulatâ personâ suâ alios introducunt, qui coram spectatoribus res ipsas sistant. The late professor Cooke's *Prælection*. p. vi. prefixed to his edition of *Aristotle's Poetics*, published at Cambridge, with notes that display an accurate learning and a sagacious insight into the sense of his author.

which

which would not be justly made of any other *Græcian* or *Roman* author, to the best of my recollection at this moment. In *Homer's* poetry, all is action and animation, arising from crowded events and busy characters :

Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus.

The poet never appears in person, and only operates, like the mind in the corporeal frame, with a vigorous energy, but undefineable and unseen*. The same observations are strictly applicable also to the histories of the *Old Testament*; and it is to me an agreeable consideration, that two works of such indubitable antiquity, as the *Bible* and *Homer*, should thus agree in a circumstance highly consonant to the simplicity of primæval manners; in wearing so plausible a mark of authenticity, with regard to the pretensions of an early origin, stamped on their features. But the most superficial observer need not be told, and the most forward caviller cannot deny, that the historical parts of the *New Testament* ought not to concede the palm of superiority to any writings whatsoever upon the subject of this innate recommendation

* *Homer* describes no qualities or virtues, censures no manners; makes no encomiums, nor gives characters himself, but brings his actors still in view. 'Tis they who shew themselves. *Shaftsbury's Characteristics*, i. p. 197.

of veracity. Now it is manifest, that laboured encomiums of the personages introduced, or minute and balanced estimations of their worth, and philosophical investigations of their motives to action, are the proper productions of students, schooled in rhetoric and exercised in oratory; neither suited to the taste, nor attainable by the powers, of plain uneducated men. A simple detail, therefore, of occurrences, divested of these artificial and adventitious ornaments, seems not only more accordant to every rational idea of honest intention and authentic report, but is perfectly correspondent to the *reputed authors* of the *gospel histories*: so that the stile and colour of these narratives is at once more favourable in itself to our preconceived notions of veracity, and harmonizes also with the *political condition* of the writers. Indeed, a review of the authenticity of the *gospels* may be most fitly compared to our progress from the fountain-head of a river along it's banks. We find, as we proceed, a perpetual influx of auxiliary streams contributing to augment the torrent.—I will corroborate these sentiments by a pertinent quotation from a most useful and important work*.

“ If

* *Lord Montboddo's Origin and Progress of Languages*: a performance, not capable of being relished by superficial and

“ If a narrative is much ornamented, it has
 “ not the appearance of *truth*, but of a *tale*, de-
 “ signed either to impose upon the hearer, or to
 “ make an ostentatious shew of the author’s ge-
 “ nius. Hence it comes, that the narrative of
 “ *Homer* is more credible than that of *Virgil*; not
 “ only because it is more circumstantial, which
 “ also gives a great air of truth to a story, but
 “ because it is less ornamented.”

Hence we may learn more fully the propriety of that apostrophe, so feelingly addressed by the *Son of Man* to his omnipotent commissioner*:

I thank thee, (I entirely assent to thy conduct in this respect) O! Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from men of wisdom and knowledge, and revealing them to BABES.

This is a sentiment replete with wisdom: and it is most indisputable, that the *evangelical histories* would have been assailable by very serious objectors and conceited readers, but in my estimation worthy of much greater approbation than it has received from the public, notwithstanding some capital errors in the *theory*, and various inaccuracies arising from a confined knowledge of modern publications and too partial an acquaintance with the *Greek* literature at large. See Part ii. Book 4th, Chap. 10th.

— non ego paucis

Offendar maculis.

* Matt. xi. 25.

tions, had they been composed by men of eloquence and learning; and the dispensation itself encumbered with peculiar difficulties, if it's primitive teachers and professors had principally issued from the mansions of the rich or the schools of the philosophers. We have reason to rejoice, that *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, were originally called* *.

REMARK XXIX.

THERE are some extraordinary circumstances in the character of *St. Peter*, so entirely conformable to human nature, as enhance the supposition of imposture to a very considerable height of improbability, and are an able advocate for the genuineness of the *gospels*.

This apostle put in practice on every occasion the advice, which *Peleus* gave to his son *Achilles*, when he dismissed him to the *Trojan* war †:

Διεν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπείροχον εἶμηναι ἄλλων.

*A brave pre-eminence above thy peers
Be thy ambition.*

When *Jesus* (to illustrate this *remark* by instances) was walking on the sea, *Peter* alone had the

* 1 Cor. i. 26.

† Il. A. 782.

resolution

resolution to quit the vessel, and trust himself to the surface of the waters *. *Peter* had the honour of giving the only true answer to that arduous question of our Lord, *Whom say ye that I am? Thou art the Christ*, says our apostle, *the Son of the living God* †.—*Peter* undertook to reprove his master, amidst the silence of the rest of the disciples, for talking of his sufferings and death ‡.—*Peter* alone ventured to deliver his opinion upon that extraordinary circumstance of our Lord's *transfiguration* on the mount §.—*Peter* had the courage to *enter the sepulchre*, when *John*, as it should seem, was afraid to venture; with a view of examining the place where our Lord had lain ||.—*Peter* alone, after the resurrection of *Jesus*, cast himself into the sea, to join his master upon the shore ¶.—The *Jews* themselves appear to have considered *Peter* as the most active and forward and most favoured (as Matt. xvii. 1. Mark v. 37.) of all the disciples. The collectors of the money for the temple apply to *him* for our Lord's contribution, and *he* reports their inquiry to his master **.—*His* inquisitive temper distinguishes itself

* Matt. 14. 28.

† Matt. xvi. 15, 16.

‡ Vers. 22.

§ Matt. xvii. 4.

|| John xx. 6.

¶ John xxi. 7.

** Matt. xvii. 24, 25.

also on other occasions of less moment*.—And, when *Jesus* was apprehended, *Peter* gave good proof of a seemingly determined resolution to defend his master, and to fulfil his late protestations of adhering to him, though all his fellow-disciples should prove faithless: for *John* has expressly informed us, that it was *Simon Peter*, who drew his sword, and smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear†.

“Yes;” most men will be apt to say, “such a character as this, who made such liberal professions of love and service, and moreover appeared to entertain juster notions of his master’s person and office than the other apostles, might naturally have deserved more dependence to be placed on him in a time of danger, than those, who by their silence had sufficiently declared themselves to be possessed of less forwardness and resolution: especially too after the voluntary, the public, and unserved avowal of his determination to be, like another *Abdiel*,

—————“faithful found
“Among the faithless, faithful only he †.”

* Matt. xv. 15. Luke xii. 41. Matt. xviii. 21, xix. 27. John xiii. 6. See also Luke v. 5. viii. 45, † xviii. 10.

† ————— ὅτι ἐκ πολλοῖς ἔργων
Μορὸν προσευχῶν πιστῶν. Soph. Elect.

In

In this train, I say, *most* men would be disposed to reason on this case: and, if a *Galilean* fisherman, unpractised, as one of his solitary occupation and insulated life must inevitably be, in the study of human manners, had spun this history from the thread of his own invention, I cannot entertain a doubt but *Peter's* conduct would have been *uniformly* preserved through the piece, in a manner correspondent to the former delineation of his character and the boldness of his pretensions. But the picture, now presented to our view, exhibits a much more probable representation of real life; and is indeed so accurate in it's resemblance, as to appear beyond the ability of inventive ingenuity; proclaiming the designer of it to have worked from an undoubted original before him. If not, let our adversaries give some reasonable account of that comprehensive imitator, who surveyed this exact transcript of life and manners in the confined limits only of his own bosom.

We are told by a surgeon of eminence in his profession *, that it was judged necessary to amputate severally one of the arms of two boys in the hospital, of the same age and similar consti-

* I recollect perfectly well to have read this account in some volume of the *Annual Register*, but have several times attempted in vain to find the passage.

tutions,

tutions. One consented at once to the operation without betraying any symptoms of timidity, when the opinion of the surgeon was declared to him on the preceding night. The other was with much difficulty indeed persuaded to acquiesce, and shewed signs of the utmost horror and dejection at the thought of the approaching catastrophe. What was the event? The boy, of so much readiness and spirit, sunk into timidity; and endured the operation with no degree of firmness: the other supported his severe trial with a true manly resolution*.—The relator observes, I think, that he had been witness to a similar issue in other instances of this nature.

And here let me notice, before I quit this subject, with what propriety and beauty our Lord addresses himself to *this* apostle, as well on account of his usual forwardness, as the vehemence of his late protestations: *And he cometh to the disciples and findeth them asleep, and SAITH TO PETER:*

* "Mention is made in the epistle of the church of
 " *Smyrna*, and in other ancient records, of some rash and
 " presumptuous *Christians*, who offered themselves to mar-
 " *tyrdom*, and who, when they were condemned, lost all
 " courage and deserted their cause; whilst others, who
 " had been diffident of themselves, and had retired, being
 " discovered and seized, died in a most *Christian* manner."

JORTIN'S *Remarks*, Book ii. Part 1,

So,

*So, could ye not watch with me one hour * ?* A fine reproof of his temerity, and a secret intimation, as it were, of the approaching dereliction of his engagement: and especially, as the circumstance is recorded specifically by Mark: *And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping; and saith to Peter: SIMON! art THOU asleep? Couldst not THOU WATCH ONE HOUR †?*

This account gives me an opportunity of pointing out a parallel mark of authenticity, from a conformity to real life, in the history of our Saviour.

His agony of spirit on the nearer approach of his crucifixion could not be exceeded. The eloquent physician has exhausted the powers of language in his description of it. But the heroism, with which the Saviour of the world, notwithstanding this previous dejection of soul, supported the exquisite tortures of the cross, ennobles our common nature, and furnishes the most illustrious example of fortitude and magnanimity, that has been exhibited since the foundation of the world. And, I believe, it will be found true from observation, that minds of a fine and delicate texture, not only not deficient in spirit and resolution on other occasions, but on the contrary dis-

* Matt. xxvi. 40.

† C. xiv. v. 37.

tutions. One consented at once to the operation without betraying any symptoms of timidity, when the opinion of the surgeon was declared to him on the preceding night. The other was with much difficulty indeed persuaded to acquiesce, and shewed signs of the utmost horror and dejection at the thought of the approaching catastrophe. What was the event? The boy, of so much readiness and spirit, sunk into timidity; and endured the operation with no degree of firmness: the other supported his severe trial with a true manly resolution*.—The relator observes, I think, that he had been witness to a similar issue in other instances of this nature.

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* Matt. xxvi. 40.

† C. xiv. v. 37.

tinguished for their intrepidity, are agitated with a horror proportionate to their sensibility, on the near prospect of bodily pain. The conduct of *Socrates*, at the conclusion of life, reflects the highest honour on that admirable man: but, not to insist on other circumstances of superiority on the part of *Jesus*, a draught of hemlock, and the anguish of suspension by the hands and feet, perforated with nails, will admit of no comparison. The *Athenian* was in every respect truly great*; but we do no injury to truth and him, when we assert, that our *Nazarene* was greater than he.

* *Porphry*, with a view, it is probable, of establishing the superior virtue of his master *Pythagoras* (a character in reality not less exalted, as far as we can judge from the accounts delivered of him, than *Socrates* himself) *Porphry*, I say, propagates some calumnies against the illustrious *Athenian*, which are eagerly caught up by *Cyril*, to the disgrace of this *Christian apologist*. Neither *Christ* nor *Pythagoras* wish to build their praises

On the fall'n ruins of another's fame.

See *Cyril*, cont. Jul. p. 186. 216. to whom, perhaps, his own reflection on *Timæus*, p. 208. is applicable; that his "ill-will to *Socrates* impairs his credibility."

REMARK

REMARK XXX.

THE manner, in which the apostles, with all simplicity and freedom, mention their own *failings*, and in which *Matthew* and *John* make no exception of themselves from the number of those, whom their master reproves for their faithlessness and stupidity; must be allowed by every candid person to carry with it a pleasing air of impartiality and veracity*. Indeed this acknowledgment of infirmity, error, and misconduct in life and in opinion, is characteristic of noble minds, and could hardly be expected from men of mean acquirements, low birth, and probably contracted hearts, without some powerful extraneous principle; such a principle, for instance, as *Christianity*, whose enlightening doctrines are so plain as to accommodate themselves to every capacity, and are calculated to exert their ennobling influence alike on the highest and lowest orders of society.

I have always been much delighted with a passage in *Celsus*, which falls in very exactly with the

* *Pisides apud Suidam.*

Οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα πρὸ χάρις καυχώμεθα,
Ἀπὸλοι δὲ πάντες τῆς ἀληθείας λόγον.

train of these ideas. "*Hippocrates*," says he *,
 " has informed us, that he once mistook the su-
 " tures of the skull for a fracture : in the true spi-
 " rit of a great genius, conscious of his extraordi-
 " nary accomplishments. For the qualifications
 " of little minds are but a small amount, and will
 " admit of no deduction. Indeed the simple
 " confession of actual mistakes is peculiarly be-
 " coming such accomplished characters, who can
 " easily spare a little from their copious stores :
 " and especially a confession upon those points,
 " which may prove beneficial to posterity." In
 this view the following remarks of *Eusebius* will
 give strength to the argument before us :

" *Matthew*, the *apostle*, was not conversant with
 " men of honourable occupations in his former
 " life, but came from among *tax-gatherers* and

* Cels. Lib. viii. C. 4. The passage alluded to occurs
 in *Hippocrates de Morb. Vulg. v. 7. 27.* *Julian* also refers
 to it in his 59th *epistle* : and *Plutarch*, ii. p. 83. And equal
 commendation is due to our countryman *Sydenham* for a
 similar confession in his *Treatise De Hydrope. Equidem*
probe memini, &c. p. 487. Edit. Lugd. Bat.—*Claudian* sings
 with great sweetness on this topic, de sext. cons. Hon. v.
 592.

Nil cumulat verbisque nihil fiducia celat :
Fucati sermonis opem mens conscia laudis
Abnuat.

extortioners.

“ *extortioners*. This appears from none of the
 “ *evangelists*, not even from his fellow-apostle
 “ *John*, nor yet from *Luke*, nor *Mark*; but *Mat-*
 “ *thew* himself proclaims the disgrace, and be-
 “ comes his own accuser. Hear how expressly
 “ he mentions the circumstance in the *gospel*
 “ written by himself: *Jesus passing by thence, saw*
 “ *a man sitting at the receipt of custom, named*
 “ *MATTHEW* *. And afterwards, when he enu-
 “ merates the *apostles*, he says: *Thomas and MAT-*
 “ *THEW THE PUBLICAN* †.” And these obser-
 vations are succeeded by others, which the reader
 will not think unworthy of consultation.

It is superfluous to mention a particular so
 well known to those conversant in these subjects,
 that the same recommendation arises to *Mark's*
gospel from the specification of *Peter's* name in
 several instances peculiar to *that* narrative; be-
 cause we are told by the early writers of *Christian*
antiquity, that *Peter* assisted the author in the
 composition of his history.

The disinterestedness of the *evangelists* will lose
 no reputation by a contrast with the *two* histo-
 rians of antiquity, between whom and them a com-
 parison may most properly be instituted; *Xeno-*
phon and *Julius Cæsar*. The sacred penmen cer-

* C. ix. v. 9.

† C. x. v. 3.

tainly keep more aloof from *personality* and *exaggeration*, than either of these celebrated writers; of whom it will be sufficient to remark on this occasion, that the *Athenian* evidently shews *himself* through the latter part of his history; and the *Roman*, beyond all controversy, from the testimony of other historians, dissembled the truth in his own favour, respecting, for example, the invasion of *our country*. The insinuation of our most finished poet is not more satirical than true:

Cesar himself might whisper he was *BEAT*.

REMARK XXXI.

THE manner, in which the *gospel-historians* have related the death of *Judas**, appears to me so singular, that I am persuaded no *two* writers could possibly deliver such *apparently differing* accounts of the *same* transaction, who had not the *reality* itself under contemplation at the time; and, seeing no difficulty or obscurity themselves, (which is a case of perpetual occurrence) could have no suspicion of creating difficulty and obscurity to

* The reader, who feels himself so inclined, may read some further *remarks* on this circumstance in my *Memoirs*, p. 381. and the *second part* of the *Silva Critica*, on the text, sect. 84.

others

others by any diversities of expression. My argument upon this topic carries with it, I must confess, irresistible conviction to my own mind; and I shall rejoice, if I so conduct it as to communicate an equal impression in favour of the books, which contain it, to the mind of the reader.

Now my conclusion in favour of the authenticity of the *gospels*, from the *two* accounts of the death of *Judas*, is founded upon these *two* suppositions:

1. That, whether the later historian of the two, *Matthew* and *Luke*, had seen or not the history of his predecessor, the circumstances of the false apostle's death must be, in all probability, perfectly known to them both: though the more reasonable supposition certainly is, that *Luke*, from his connection with *Paul* and the leading men in the church, and indeed from the close union of all its members at that early period, must have been acquainted with the *gospel* of *St. Matthew*; whom I should judge for many reasons to be the *earlier* writer*.

* An early date of *Matthew's* gospel, is countenanced, in my judgement, by many and high probabilities: and I am of opinion, that the other hypothesis, of a late publication, has not a single probability to support it. See *Mr. Townson's* excellent work on the *gospels*.

M

2. That

2. That the immediate cause of the death of *Judas* was a *dysentery*, brought on by excessive sorrow and perturbation of spirits.

As to the *first* position, it is scarcely possible to imagine, that the last circumstances of the life of *Judas*, who had acted such an extraordinary part, could have been unknown to any of the first disciples: circumstances too, so extraordinary in themselves, must have been the subject of frequent conversation and enquiry in the church. Indeed *St. Peter*, or rather *St. Luke*, has expressly told us, that the death of *Judas* was a matter of public notoriety to *all the dwellers at Jerusalem* *.

My *second* position I find myself able to establish upon very solid ground; and I thereby bring the sacred writers to a perfect *consistency* of narrative. This is, in my apprehension, a very important point indeed: for no ingenuity of man can strain the two accounts of this transaction to a satisfactory reconciliation upon any other supposition; and I cannot but think, that a strong suspicion would lie against the *general credibility* of the *evangelists*, if they could be proved to have given *contradictory* relations of so remarkable and notorious a fact.

* Acts i. 19.

Matthew

Matthew tells us, that *Judas cast down the money in the temple, and went and HANGED HIMSELF*; as our translation has it: but I say, *And went and DIED WITH ANGUISH*: ἀπεθὼν ἀπυγχαλο, says the original*. This word is only once used by the Greek translators in the canonical books of the Old-Testament, and then in the account of *Ahithophel's death*†; who is supposed to have put a period to his existence in the same way with *Judas*. The Hebrew word employed upon that occasion is חנק, which is also adopted by all the other oriental versions, to which I have access, both here and in *St. Matthew*, except by the *Coptic* and *Persic*; who seem, however, to have followed the usual acceptation of the passage. Some of the *Rabbins* interpret that word of *choaking with sorrow*, and attribute the death of *Ahithophel* to the gradual effects of *disappointment* and *vexation*. And this interpretation is rendered extremely probable by considering that תלה is the word used in a great variety of passages for *hanging*, and that חנק is never once clearly employed in this sense. I make no account of a passage in *Job*, where the reading, I think, is not genuine; and, if it be, our present translation is improper.

* Matt. xxvii. 5.

† 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

It is observable, that in the history of *Saul's* distemper*, which was certainly a *melancholy*†, the *Septuagint* says, that *an evil spirit from the Lord* CHOAKT HIM: employing a word exactly equivalent to that used by *St. Matthew*. And *Josephus* says, that *certain affections and dæmons invaded Saul, bringing upon him SUFFOCATIONS and STRANGLINGS*‡. And my sense of the *Hebrew* word, is corroborated by the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Jerusalem* on *Gen. xxii. 20.* which say, that, when *Sarah* was told of *Abraham's* intention to sacrifice *Isaac*, she was SUFFOCATED, AND DIED THROUGH ANXIETY§.

It is evident from these authorities, that *St. Matthew's* expression will not only bear the translation, which I propose, but, considering that he was a *Jew*, rather requires it.

As to *St. Luke's* relation of this matter, it is a just and classical description of a man exhausted and perishing by the violence of a *dysentery*. The following is a proper translation of it.

* 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

† See some observations on this point in my *Silva Critica*, part i. sect. 12.

‡ Τον Σαυλον δι' περιρρηξίαν πάθη τινα καὶ δαίμονια, πνιγμὲς αὐτοῦ καὶ σφραγγαλαί, ἐπιφεροῦσιν Ant. vi. 8. 2.

§ ἡρῶν τοῦ γένους προσηύχον. See *Alexis* in *Athen. Deip.* vi. 2. and ix. 12. and others to the same purpose.

He fell flat upon his face, and made a noise by bursting in the middle; and all his bowels were poured out*.

The *πρηνης γενομενος* of our Evangelist may be well illustrated by this passage of Euripides, *Alcest.* 141.

Ἡδὴ προσηπης ἐστὶ καὶ ψυχόρραγχι.

Not unlike this is—*ρήξει αὐτὸς πρηνεῖς.* Sap. Sol. iv. 19.

The phrase—*ελακνησε μεσος*—is admirably vindicated by a gloss of Hesychius, which I long ago corrected from this expression of St. Luke: *Μεσο-Φαρδεν, ΜΕΣΟΛΑΚΕΙΝ.*—To the same purpose this of Plautus *Curc.* ii. 1, 7.

Nihil metuo, nisi ne medius dirumpar miser; and that of Virgil:

————— RUMPANTUR ut ILIA Codro:

and many others of the same kind, derived from the Greeks. So Aristophanes, *Ran.* 955. *Ὁφελος μεσος διαρραχηναι.*

And that the words—*εξεχυθη παντα τα σπλαγχνα αὐτου*—suitably describe the effects of a dysentery,

* Acts i. 18.

the learned reader may be convinced by consulting the *Scholiast* on Aristoph. Vesp. 604.

It seems pretty clear, that *Jehoram* died of this distemper. In 2 Chron. xxi. 18, 19. the following account is given of it.

Jehovah smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease; and his BOWELS CAME OUT, and he died of grievous evacuations.

Τῶν ἐντέρων ἐκπύεσθαι, says *Josephus* in his relation of this malady. Ant. ix. 5. 2.

Dr. *Mead's* testimony is very explicit and satisfactory.

Non alius, ut mihi videtur, fuit hic morbus, quàm gravis dysenteria. In hac enim intestina exulcerantur;—nonnunquàm etiàm carnosà quædam ramenta simul descendunt, ità ut ipsa intestina ejici videantur. The last particular I have known myself to take place in this disorder.

The account, given by *Josephus* of the death of *Aristobulus*, is very much to our purpose.

Remorse for his crime brings a distemper upon Aristobulus; and, his mind continually dwelling upon the murder, he wasted away, and discharged much blood, as HIS BOWELS WERE TORN BY EXCESSIVE SORROW.*

* Τῶν σπλαγγῶν ὑπ' ἀκραίᾳ τῆς λύπης σπαρασσόμενων, αἵματι αἰμαῖα. Bell. Jud. i. 3. 6. Compare Ant. xiii. 2, 3.

Another

Another passage of the same author is too pertinent and striking to be omitted. It was intended, no doubt, for a description of the *same disorder*; which the preceding circumstances of the person's history might lead us to attribute also to the *same cause* of sorrow and vexation. Indeed experience abundantly shews, that these passions *physically* operate upon the bowels: and from this fact, many *figurative* expressions both in the *Old* and *New Testament* are derived, and in *profane* authors also*.

Zenodorus, HIS BOWELS BURSTING and a large effusion of blood ensuing, dies at Antioch in Syria†.

It is very sensibly suggested by my friend Mr. Walker of Nottingham in his second sermon on the character of Judas, that "the traitor
" was designed by his employers to have acted
" a still farther part, and had himself intend-
" ed to have appeared a more considerable ac-
" tor, in the transactions of the succeeding day,
" if his sudden and unexpected repentance had
" not defeated the design.

* Angor est animi vel corporis cruciatus; propriè à Græco συναγχει, id est, strangulatione dictus. Undè et faucium dolor angina vocatur: Fæstus in v. angor.

† Παγνήσιον αὐτὸν τὴν συναγχὴν, καὶ πολλὰ ὑποχωρήσας αἱματὶ.
Ant. xv. 10. 3.

“It would have been a great point gained, in order to support the appearance of disinterested justice, and turn the popular prejudice against him, if one of his own disciples should stand forth his accuser, and give testimony to the supposed crimes, which they meant to alledge against him.”

In connection with this extremely probable hypothesis, we may see the reason, in a detestation of such perfidy, of the uniformly degrading terms, in which *Judas* is spoken of by the *evangelists*: the propriety of recording that circumstance of his *throwing down the money*, as the act of one, who had not performed his engagements; and the reasonableness of such extreme remorse, as to be productive of so violent and unusual a dissolution.

My two propositions have thus been established, I presume, to a very high degree of probability. Now the proposition deducible from these premises is obvious and simple; namely this: No two persons in their senses, who had set themselves to fabricate a *feigned* history, would ever have given two such accounts of the same transaction. Impostors, always on their guard to avoid a suspicion of collusion and deceit, would certainly have studied to adjust their relations to a
greater

greater appearance of agreement and consistency; nor have trusted to the ingenuity and uncertainty of criticism for future vindication. There could not have arisen, in my judgement, more decisive evidence of an artless unsuspecting integrity, delivering to posterity the record of a *real transaction* within the compass of their *own knowledge*. Such a degree of *obscurity*, and so much *appearance* of inconsistency, is highly advantageous to the cause of truth. The relations are very different, but, on a closer inspection, evidently describe a similar mode of death: as in *arithmetic* and *geometry*, *numbers* and *figures* very distinct are in both sciences brought into relation with each other by the intervention of a *third**. Every man's experience will inform him, how apt we are to omit in a relation little circumstances, very essential to give *another* a clear insight into the fact, which *our* perfect knowledge of it leads *us* to disregard; not reflecting, that an entire stranger to it cannot possibly possess the same train of ideas, that ocular observation has infused into our own

* An observation of *Strabo's* relative to the *geographical inconsistencies* of writers is very applicable to the present case; but on account of it's length, I forbear quotation, and content myself with referring to it: p. 41. im. edit. Amst.

minds.

minds. No error more natural than this; no presumption more customary both in books and in common life.—But it is time to leave the reader to his own reflections.

Yet I cannot conclude this *article* without specifying another argument in behalf of the authenticity of the *gospels* from a *seeming contradiction* and a *real agreement*, respecting *Matt. xxiii. 27.* and *Luke xi. 44.* as reconciled by *Dr. Pococke* in his *not. misc. cap. v.* quoted also by *Mr. Townson*, p. 97. 4to. edition; whom the reader will do well to consult.

REMARK XXXII.

FROM the peculiar complexion and phraseology of *St. John's gospel* a critical observer may deduce no inconsiderable argument in behalf of the *Christian revelation*.

It is well known from the account of *John* himself, delivered with a modest simplicity that repels every suspicion of partial misrepresentation from the narrative, that he was the disciple, on whom our Lord reposed a greater confidence, and whom he regarded with sentiments of peculiar friendship and affection. When *Jesus* had declared, that one of the apostles then at table
with

with him would be his betrayer to the Jews, we are told, that *Simon Peter beckoned to John, who was leaning on Jesus' bosom*, to ask him of whom he spake*: a question, which implies, no less than *John's situation at the table*, a more intimate familiarity with his master. Besides, our Lord's recommendation of *Mary to John's protection*, and the manner of that recommendation, is a further proof, independent of the apostle's own express testimony to the same effect, of mutual esteem and love. And this reciprocal attachment argues of necessity a *congenial temper and a similar frame of mind*.

Add to this, that *John* was called to be an apostle in an early period of our Lord's ministry: a longer time, therefore, of attendance on the public life of *Jesus*, as well as more frequent opportunities of private observation, would unavoidably operate in producing a more exact resemblance of character between them.

Now what is the natural, and indeed necessary, conclusion from these considerations? Truly, that the *gospel* of this beloved disciple must contain, in all probability, a more *true and lively repre-*

* See John xiii. 23, 24. xxi. 22.

sentation of the life and conversation of his master, than those written by *evangelists* differently circumstanced in these respects. If so, and *Jesus Christ* be that *word* and *wisdom* of God, which the writings of the *New-Testament* declare him to have been, *St. John's* gospel will be likely to contain more and clearer marks of authenticity,—to wear a complexion eminently characteristic of its original,—and to comprise an intrinsic usefulness and excellence, above the rest.

And such, I am strongly persuaded in my own mind, is the *fact*. This position, however, admits of little reference, but to the private judgment of the unprejudiced and competent examiner. Yet I must be permitted to declare my opinion, that *St. John's* gospel is the least understood of all the *four*: and that a more close and critical perusal of it will gradually disclose its excellencies with increasing illustration, and will continue furnishing additional corroboration and clearness to the argument advanced in this *Remark*. “*TIME*,” says an illustrious ancient, “overthrows the fictions of opinion, and establishes the decisions of Truth and Nature.”

REMARK

REMARK XXXIII.

THE multiplicity of little incidents interspersed through the *gospels*, so consonant to real action and the acknowledged operations of the mind; such an artless mention of circumstances seemingly trivial, but in reality, upon discussion, of the highest moment;—not only remove every suspicion of forgery from illiterate *tax-gatherers* and *fishermen*, but claim the legitimate extraction of integrity and truth. I will endeavour to select a few particulars out of *many*, that seem to me not ill adapted to illustrate and confirm this observation.

1. What can wear a more *natural* appearance in every feature than the following relation? or where shall we find a more faithful description of that mean jealousy and eagerness to depreciate superiour merit, so lamentably observable in the world?

And, when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said: Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son?*

* Matt. xiii. 54—58.

I cannot

I cannot forbear quoting on this occasion an epitaph on the poet *Æschylus*, as the tenour of it falls in so pertinently with the subject of this *Remark*.*

*This tomb proclaims renowned Æschylus,
Far from his native soil, reposing here;
Hand by Sicilian Gela's limpid stream.
Why wilt thou thus, invidious Athens! why
Still persecute thy best and noblest sons?*

2. No study and ingenuity could easily have given us such a lively representation of the suspicion and uneasiness of conscious guilt in the most elaborate picture, as this single stroke of a plain unaffected copier from nature:

At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants: THIS IS JOHN THE BAPTIST; HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD†.

* Αἰσχυλὸν ἦδε λέγει ταφῇ λιθῷ ἐμβαδὶ κεῖσθαι,
Τὸν μέγαν, οἰκίης τῇλ' ἀπὸ Κακροπίνης,
Λευκὰ Γέλας Σικελίῳ παρ' ὕδαλα. τίς φθονῷ ἀσίων
Θησιδᾶς ἀγαθῶν ἐγκόλῳ αἰεὶ ἔχει;

"The Athenians are blamed, says *Eustathius* in Il. p. 934.
"as harsh to all; peculiarly addicted to envy, to abuse,
"to banish, to condemn; and especially their best citi-
"zens: witness *Aristides*, *Alcibiades*, *Socrates*, and a mul-
"titude of others."

† Matt. xiv. 1—3.

The

The deliberate and unprovoked murder of a righteous man, whom yet he loved and respected*, to gratify a malicious wicked woman and his drunken nobles, filled his mind with perpetual alarm. Wherever he went, the phantom still pursued his steps with unrelenting perseverance: no incident so immaterial, no event so extraordinary, with which his imagination did not equally associate the frightful subject of his cruelty. Even the established laws of nature, he thought, might *easily* be superseded for one end at least, the disturbance of *his* repose:—IT IS JOHN THE BAPTIST:—HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD.

The copious description of the sublime satirist, noble as it is, does not furnish a more lively idea of the horrors of conscious guilt, than this short ejaculation of the *Jewish tetrarch*†.

3. Numerous particulars, in these histories, devoid of all art and ostentation, seem to indicate *personal appearance* and *ocular testimony*. And this circumstance gives also, as I have intimated before, much confirmation to *Mark's gospel*, in relation to the testimony of the ancients, that in the drawing of it up he was assisted by *St. Peter*.

* Mark vi. 20.

† Juv. xiii. 210—236.

Matthew says in general, that the disciples had forgot to take bread with them*: *Mark* tells us, that they had a single loaf†. And whosoever shall be inclined to a minute comparison, which any reader may easily perform, will discover many particulars admirably conducive to the ascertainment of this position‡.

4. When our *evangelist* informs us, that the woman shook together the alabaster box of ointment before she poured it on the head of *Jesus*||, he not only uses the expression of an eye-witness, but of one, who was acquainted with the mixed perfumes there spoken of, and must therefore have written, probably, when such boxes and such ointments were in use§.

5. It was *night* at the time of our Lord's examination before the high-priest: and therefore an objection might arise with some to the account given of *Peter's* conduct, who followed at a dis-

* *Matt.* xvi. 3. + *Mark* viii. 14.

† *Matt.* xxvii. 55. is a circumstance, which no artful fabricator of a fictitious story, aware of the malice of mankind, would have invented.

|| *Ch.* xiv. 3.

§ I forbear to transcribe, what I have before endeavoured to confirm by various passages from ancient authors; and accordingly shall refer, for the sake of brevity, to some observations on this text in the *Theological Repository*, and my *Silva Critica*, Part I. mentioned above.

tance,

*tance**, and could not easily be distinguished in the dark. But we are informed, that there was a fire in the hall of the high-priest, and that Peter sat and warmed himself there. Hence it is, that the maid-servant is said to LOOK UPON HIM, before she speaks: plainly intimating, that she was examining by the light of the fire, whether it really was Peter or not.

Other strong presumptions, as they strike me, of ocular testimony may be produced both from him and the other evangelists.

The following account, for example, has every symptom of a real transaction circumstantially recorded by an observer of the natural representation of the relator. You see the action in a description so truly animated.

*For I also, who am a man under authority, have soldiers under me: and I say to this, GO, and he goeth; and to another, COME, and he cometh; and to my servant, DO THIS, and he doeth it**.

To which this also may be properly subjoined:

*And there was following him a certain young man with a linen garment thrown about his naked body; and the young men lay hold on him: but he left the garment behind, and fled from them naked**.

* Mark xiv. 54. † Ver. 67. ‡ Mark xiv. 51, 52.

The description is well suited to the case of a person suddenly roused from sleep by the tumult in the street; and of one active, and curious to acquaint himself with the particulars: which are all very probable circumstances, and delineated conformably to such probability in the relation. Had the person mentioned been *old*, or with *all his clothes on*, our attention would not have been particularly excited by any prominent features in the narrative, declaratory of the *time* and *singularity* of the incident.

I shall only add, that, if any of my readers will take the trouble of comparing together the several accounts of the *four evangelists* concerning the separate *denials* of *Peter*, he will discover, if I mistake not, such numerous indications of veracity, as will impress a most agreeable conviction on his mind. To me, at least, they appear highly cogent and satisfactory.

6. This artless relation of *St. John* amounts of itself to an ample confutation of that idle calumny, that the *disciples came by night and stole the body of our Lord* *.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen cloaths lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen cloaths, but wrapped together in a place by itself †.

* Matt. xxviii. 13.

† John xxii. 6, 7.

Are these appearances of *composure* and *regularity* at all suitable with the HURRY and TREPIDATION OF THIEVES, when an armed guard too is at hand, plundering by NIGHT *?—The historian, we may observe, does not dwell upon the circumstance, as if it were specified with a *direct* view of removing some secret difficulty; as a forger would probably have done: but delivers it with all the simplicity of an unsuspecting relator of truth; and thereby leaves it with far more weight of evidence, than if it had been accompanied by a multiplicity of reasons and a laboured explanation. *Pindar* observes, with his usual pregnancy of wisdom, that *three words will be sufficient in a good cause* *.

* With a similar view, and with exquisite dexterity, *Cicero* says of *Milo*, to prove the purity of his purposes;—*domum venit; calceos et vestimenta mutavit, &c.* for the passage is well known to every one at all conversant with ancient literature.

Sedulius comments on this text with equal force and vivacity: Hymn. Pasch. iv.

————— anne beati
Corporis ablator VELOCITUS esse putavit
Solvere contextum, quàm devectare ligatum,
Cum MORA sit FURTIS contraria? Cautius ergo
Cum domino potuere magis sua lintea tolli.
Mentita est vox vana sibi.

* Εὐνομοί 15 διὰ

Ἰππία πρὸς Διόγνητον. Nem. vii.

A circumstance significant of authenticity, and of a nature exactly similar to those, which have been produced under this *remark*, occurs in the *third* book of *Thucydides*, towards the conclusion; and will serve to elucidate the scope and pertinency of this mode of reasoning.

A herald came from a small state of *Greece*, demanding a truce for the burial of the dead, that had been slain in an engagement *two* days before. Upon seeing, with much astonishment, a number of slain far beyond his expectation, and enquiring the reason from another herald, who was sent by the opposite party for the same purpose, he learnt, that another detachment of his countrymen had been cut off the day before. Notwithstanding the importance of his errand, (for nothing was more revered in those days than the rites of the *dead*) his mind was so entirely overpowered by the shock of this unexpected and unequalled calamity, as to leave him no leisure for other thoughts. He raised a loud cry of lamentation, and went away without executing the purpose of his message.

REMARK

REMARK XXXIV.

THE *gospels* hold out a representation of the *manners* of the *common people*, which has its accuracy ascertained by uniform experience and the general voice of the histories of mankind.

Whether (which is now my own decided opinion) the attachment of the multitude to our Saviour were weakened by the disappointment * of that universal expectation among the *Jews*, that their *Messiah* would erect a *temporal* kingdom; or any other undiscoverable cause wrought the change on the humours of the mob; (for our own times have given many proofs of these capricious quick transitions†, and how great a fire one spark

* They were looking for some great miracle previous to his possession of regal power: compare Matt. xxvi. 53—57. John xii. 17—20.

† The disposition of a populace is, to embrace any novelty and to abandon it on the slightest motives, particularly the will of their superiors. Thus the *Londoners* welcomed with shouts the return of *James* the Second, and immediately suffered him to depart with perfect indifference. The veneration of the *Parisians* for their great king, was changed at once into contempt and insult. See Quint. Curt. ix. 4. 22. and the commentators there: Dion. Cass. liii. 24. lviii. 11. lxxv. 1. *Seutonius* in many places; *Poly-*

spark of popular rage can kindle) whatever, I say, the cause might be, the people at large soon manifested so much conformity to the wishes and sentiments of their rulers, as to demand the execution of him, whom they had so lately followed through the city with *Hosannas*, and saluted as the king of Israel.

The account, which the *Roman* poet has given us of the conduct of the populace to *Sejanus*, the favourite of the emperor *Tiberius*, might serve as a comment on this part of the gospel-history. All they knew was, the emperor's displeasure and the favourite's degradation. But *this* was a sufficient ground for their immediate alienation, and for every species of insult. "If," says my author, "the minister, on the other hand, had contrived to take off his master, this very *Sejanus* would have been, at the moment of his execution, with equal cordiality and as much reason, saluted emperor in his stead by the same populace*."

bius, xi. 27, well says: Πας ὅχλος ὑπεραλογιῶν ὑπαρχον, καὶ πρὸς παρ' ὑαγῶν. So *Demosthenes*, p. 229. lin. 21. ed. Lutet. Julian, p. 455. Phil. J. ii. 350, 17. These sudden turns are influenced also by general *profligacy* of manners and monstrous *ingratitude*, too incident to the vulgar from the depravity of governments, inattentive to the virtuous discipline of their subjects.

* Juv. Sat. x. 61.

But

But, if the mistaken notion of the *Jews* respecting the nature of the *Messiah's* kingdom, really operated in producing this sudden change in the behaviour of the populace, it had scarcely produced such a *general* effect as might have been presumed from the disappointment of an expectation so agreeable, so universal, and so deeply rooted: which makes the fickleness and depravity of the vulgar still more flagrant, or, in other words, more exactly correspondent to history and experience. The seizure of *Jesus* by night strongly countenances this opinion, and cannot otherwise be explained *. When the multitude solicit the release of *Barabbas* and the execution of *Jesus*, they do not appear to express their free unbiassed opinion, but to have listened to the instigations of the *chief priests and elders* †.

Howsoever this may be determined by the reader, one circumstance attending the apprehension of *Jesus* appears to me very material, and from which I would willingly draw a most important inference; and in this I think myself countenanced by the spirit of the narrative, and the total absence, to all appearance, of such a remote intention in the mere letter of it. Let the reader decide impartially upon the reasonableness of my conclusion.

* See Luke xxii. 1—7.

† Matt. xxvii. 20.

Jesus said unto them: Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them: I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, THEY WENT BACKWARD, AND FELL TO THE GROUND.*

Now, whether we suppose the *Jewish* officers to have acted in this manner of their own accord, or to have used this caution at the instance of *Judas*, their conduct is an undeniable evidence of their *fear*; which, as far as I can discover, could arise from no other cause than a conviction of our Lord's MIRACULOUS POWER. Let any man assign a better reason, if he can. For my part, I shall continue to consider this transaction, 'till I can see a more probable solution of it upon other principles, as a most pleasing incidental attestation to the MIRACLES of JESUS.

In this case, as in that of the expulsion of the *traders* from the temple, an ascititious circumstance, which explains and reconciles a seeming difficulty of a rational historian, ought in all reason to be regarded as bordering on truth, unless self-contradictory, or repugnant to the suggestions of common-sense.

I must observe still further upon the subject of

* John xviii. 4-7.

this remark, that the behaviour of the populace of Jerusalem, in whatever point of view it may be contemplated, and upon whatever principles it may be explained, exhibits another characteristic feature in the manners of mankind at large: I mean that abominable selfishness, and insensibility to the concerns of others, which is the foulest stain that can sully the human character, and of all possible vices the most incompatible with the essence of Christianity, a system of universal and unbounded love. Let me be permitted to relate a little piece of history to this purpose*.

“ Whilst *Demosthenes* was pleading the cause
 “ of a person accused of a capital offence, he
 “ saw the audience in a state of confusion, and
 “ totally inattentive to the business, which was be-
 “ fore them. Upon this, he earnestly entreated
 “ their attention for a few minutes, and began to
 “ relate,” how a certain young man hired an ass
 to carry his clothes and provisions to *Megara*, accompanied by a driver, who was to take care of the animal and bring him back. The day proved extremely hot; and, as there was no tree, nor any kind of shelter near, to protect him from the vehemence of the sun's rays, he prepared to lay himself down under the shadow of the ass. This the ser-

* See *Suidas* in *Oru crux*.

want of the owner would not allow, maintaining, that he had hired the *ass* only, and not his *shadow*. Hereupon a most violent altercation arose between them. "When our orator had proceeded thus far in his story, he perceived the assembly to be grown attentive; highly delighted with the tale, and impatient to hear the conclusion of it. Instead of proceeding in his relation, the orator reproved them with great severity for their childish curiosity and eagerness about the *shadow of an ass*, and their scandalous unconcern for the *life of an innocent person*, whom he was defending."

Upon the whole, we may challenge any man to produce an instance of a fictitious narrative, which contains such a multitude of incidents, of more or less magnitude, so conformable throughout to the *exemplar of human life and manners**, as are supplied by the short historical writings of the *New Testament*.

* — *exemplar vitæ marumque*. Hor,

REMARK

REMARK XXXV.

It is a good symptom of authenticity in any person pretending to a *prophetic character*, if he lays down the circumstances, under which his *prophecies* will receive their completion, with *particularity* and *precision*. The correspondence of the *gospels* to this test is wonderfully striking and satisfactory.

Our Lord foretels not only the progress of the gospel, but the future persecution of his disciples; and his own death, with an enumeration of *many specific circumstances**—that he should be *betrayed* by one of his twelve *apostles*†—that *particular insults* and ill-usage would attend his apprehension—that he should be *crucified*—that he should *rise again* from the grave—and that, on the *third day* after his interment.—He foretels also the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the desertion of his apostles—that *James*, and *John*, and *Peter*, would suffer *martyrdom* for their adherence to his religion:—that *John* would live to the destruction

* Matt. xi. 2. xiv. 15;

† Βυλομεν©—ήμας παιδευσαι την προγνωσιν αυτε, λεγει· Αμην, αμην, λεγω υμιν, οτι εις εξ υμων παραδωσει με. Apost. Const. 7. 45.

of *Jerusalem*;—this *destruction* * itself, to be accomplished *before* the generation then existing should be removed from the earth,—and by the *Romans*; with a discriminate detail of many other very remarkable *peculiarities*, whose completion is minutely recorded by *Josephus*.

It is this precision, which in *Jerome's* opinion †, who indeed only follows *Josephus* ‡, gives *Daniel* a manifest superiority over the other prophets of the *Old Testament*. *Aristotle* remarks with his

* The aspect of this *prophecy* on the genuineness of the *Christian* religion is of the very first importance, and wonderfully satisfactory: but it has been well displayed by a variety of writers, and of late by *Mr. Walker* of *Nottingham*, in his *sermons*. The reader will find also, if he thinks proper to consult them, some remarks on the subject in my notes on c. xxiv. of *St. Matthew*.—On this topic of our *Lord's* prophetic power, consult also *Euseb*, præp. *Evang*, ii: 3.

† *Illud in præfatione commoneo, nullum prophetarum tam aperte dixisse de Christo. Non enim solum scribit eum esse venturum, sed etiam quo tempore venturus sit docet; et reges per ordinem digerit, et annos enumerat, ac manifestissima signa prænunciat.* *Proæm. in lib. comm. Dan.*

‡ Οὐ τα μελλούσα μόνον προφητεύων διέλεται, καθάπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι προφήται, ἀλλὰ καὶ **ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ΩΡΙΖΕΝ.** *Ant. x. 11. 7.*

Καὶ γὰρ τὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἴδιον καὶ κοινὸν ποιεῖ· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι ἀλαζονες, ὅταν τι ψευδῶνται, ἀορίστα καὶ ἀσαφὴ πειρῶνται λέγειν, φοβούμενοι τοῦ ἐλεγχθῆναι κτλ. *Aeschines cont. Ctes.*

usual accuracy and penetration*, that “pretended
 “prophets express themselves in general language.
 “In a game at odd and even,” he observes, “a
 “man may say, whether the number be odd or
 “even, much sooner than *what* it is: and that
 “such a thing *will* happen, than *when*. There-
 “fore our oracle-mongers never define *when*.”

Nor must an acute remark of Cicero's to this
 purpose be omitted†. “If this be foretold, *who*
 “is the PERSON meant? and *what* is the TIME?
 “The writer has conducted himself so dextrously,
 “that *any* event whatsoever will suit his *pro-*
 “*phesy*, since there is NO SPECIFICATION OF
 “MEN AND TIMES.”

Horace ridicules with great humour the solemn
 and pompous nothingness of the *Heathen* oracles‡:

“Son

* Rhet. iii. 4. 1. Ed. Oxon.

† *Hoc si est in libris, in QUEM HOMINEM, et in QUOD TEM-*
PUS est? Callide enim, qui illa composuit, perfecit, ut, quod-
cunque accidisset, prædictum videretur, HOMINUM ET TEM-
PORUM DEFINITIONE SUBLATA: De Div. ii. 24.

Ποιῶ δ' ἂν μοχθηρότερον τροπῶν ἀποδειξῶς τὰ τε γνητοῦς
 το γὰρ ἀποβαίνειν τίνα κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργίαν ὧν προλεγοῖται οἱ μάντις,
 ἔτε μαντικὴν ἐπιστήμην εἶναι σημεῖον ἂν εἴη, ἀλλὰ τε τιχμῶς συμ-
 πττειν ταῖς προαγορεύσεσι συμφωνεῖς τὰς ἰκασταῖς. Diogenia-
 nus apud Euseb. præp. evang. iv. 3.

‡ Sat ii. 5. 59.

O! Laertiade, quicquid dicam, aut erit aut non;
 Divinare etenim magnus mihi donat Apollo.

To

"Son of Laertes ! what I now foretel

"Will either come to pass, or IT WILL NOT:

"For Phœbus' self inspires my oracles."

My argument upon this point, in behalf of the *gospels* and the prophetic character of our Saviour, would be sensibly affected, if the liberal concession of Bishop HURD to *Pagan divination* in his *fourth Sermon on Prophecy* were at all admissible. But to call the predictions there specified, *authentic, important, and circumstantial*, betrays, I think, such a want of judgement and

To the same purpose also a ludicrous *epigram* of *Lucilius* in the *Anthologia*, from which *Ausonius* has taken his 93d *epigram*:

To ask the Libyan God three champions came,

If each should conquer in the Olympic game:

To whom the God with due solemnity:

"A CERTAIN VICTORY awaits all three,

"If thou take care that none outstrip thy FEET;

"None thee in WRESTLING, thee in BOXING beat."

Hence, I think, Mr. Markland proposes at Stat. Silv. v. l. 110. an injudicious alteration of the *prophecy* of *Nereus* in *Horace* from a general to a specific declaration:

Post CERTAS hyemas uret Achaicus

Ignis Iliacas domos.

The most remarkable prediction of the heathen writers appears to me that of *Homer*, Il. τ. 307.

Νυν δὲ δὴ Αἰνῆας βῆ Τρῳίδι ἀναξίη,

Καὶ παῖδες παῖδων, τοὶ δὲ μετόπισθε γυνῆται.

good

good sense, I had almost said, so much *credulity*, as might have altogether ruined with some the credit of a less accomplished writer. I, however, will not be disgusted with a few blemishes amidst so much excellence; and shall therefore neither repeat nor enlarge what I have said on this subject in another place*.

The very sagacious and learned *Spencer*, in his Treatise on the *Vanity of Vulgar Prophecies*, disparages, for the same reasons, which had occurred to myself, that *Prophecy of Seneca*. As the passage is short I will stay to produce it here.

* "That famous speech of *Seneca* the tragoedian,

"_____ venient annis

"*Sæcula* seris, quibus *Oceanus*

"*Vincula* rerum laxet, et ingens

"*Pateat tellus, Tithysque novos*

"*Detegat orbis, nec sit terris*

"*Ultima Thule*;

"hath been concluded *the voice of God*, a prophetic instinct referring to the discovery of *America* in these latter ages: which was indeed but *the voice of a man*; a rational conjecture, proceeding upon a probable persuasion, that

* See my Commentary on *St. Matihew*, C. xxiv. V. 34.

“so great a part of the globe of the earth was
“not all sea, and so would in time be found.”

REMARK XXXVI.

SUCH a circumstance as the following —

Joseph of Arimathea went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled, if he were already dead.*

—such a circumstance, I say, as this, no historian of any tolerable sagacity would have inserted, who was not conscious of it's truth and of an integrity totally devoid of all wish and intention to deceive. A dextrous impostor (and no inconsiderable dexterity a forger of the gospels must certainly have possessed) would immediately have discerned, that this declaration of *Pilate's wonder* at the *speedy* dissolution of our Lord must encourage a suspicion of some *contrivance* and *deception* in the matter; and countenance an insinuation that one, who had never been *dead*, as was probable, might appear *again*, without any *miracle*, to his disciples. “Besides,” (would an impostor be likely to reason with himself) “why should

* Mark xv. 43, 44.

"*Jesus expire before the two malefactors who were crucified with him?*"

And yet such satisfactory reasons may be assigned for this effect, as reflect, independent of all other corroboration, the highest probability on the narrative.

Not to insist on an opinion, which receives some countenance from scripture*, that *Jesus* was actually fastened to the cross *before* the robbers; his *earlier* dissolution is sufficiently accounted for from the low state of mind and body, in which his extreme agony in the garden, and, doubtless, the frequent anticipation of his sufferings on other occasions, previous to that extraordinary conflict, *must* have left him. It is unnecessary to look out for any *other* reason: or we might infer, upon probable grounds, an *imbecillity* of body and a *delicacy* of constitution, promoted, or produced, by a life of meditation and abstinence, of hardship and fatigue†. The solutions, which some writers‡ have given of this difficulty, are dishonourable to our Lord, detrimental to the evidences of *Christianity*,

* See Matt. xxvii. 38.

† See Matt. viii. 20. John viii. 57.

‡ Origen, Eusebius (dem. ev. p. 108) and some moderns, from Matt. xxvii. 50, on which place see my *Commentary*, and *Silva Critica*, Part iv.

without foundation in learning, reason, or scripture; and shocking to common-sense.

REMARK XXXVII.

THE backwardness of the disciples in believing the resurrection of their master, and the very scrupulous incredulity and inquisitiveness of *Thomas* in particular, are not only perfectly consistent with *their* temper and turn of mind, as set forth in other parts of these histories, and on that account probable from *uniformity*; but derive a further appearance of veracity to the historian in question, if we consider that a forger of the *gospels* would have apprehended some detriment to his grand object, the *resurrection of Jesus*, from an indisposition and unwillingness in those, who knew him best, to acknowledge their Lord again. Such frankness and simplicity of narrative are striking presumptions of the *reality* of this capital event, which is the corner-stone of *Christianity*; and indirectly prove the entire conviction of the apostles themselves, that our Lord had actually *expired* on the cross. All the circumstances of this part of the gospel-history cannot fail to make a very considerable impression on every reader of impartiality and discernment. There is a certain
limit

limit to which an impostor, aided by ingenuity and experience, may be allowed to proceed with little danger of detection; but an undeviating consistency with itself, in striking conjunctures, in which the arts of sophistry would have often dictated another conduct; and a strict conformity to the maxims of *experience*, through a *circumstantial history* of a great *variety* of *extraordinary transactions*, is, I think, beyond his ability, and seems only attainable by the honest undesigning votary of TRUTH*.

REMARK XXXVIII.

THERE occurs in the *gospel* of *St. Luke* by far the noblest specimen of what, by the courtesy of *criticism*, I would call the *SUBLIMITY* of *SILENCE*†, that human genius has been able to produce. Certainly nothing but an actual report from an *eye-witness* could have suggested such a grand and pathetic image; an image, that humbles the highest flights of poetical inspiration.

* Abfuit ergò ab his fingendi voluntas et astutia, quoniam rudes fuerunt. Aut quis possit indoctus apta inter se et cohærentia fingere, cum philosophorum doctissimi *Plato*, et *Aristoteles*, et *Epicurus*, et *Zeno*, ipsi sibi repugnantia et contraria dixerint? Hæc est enim mendaciorum natura, ut cohærere non possint. Lactant. v. 3.

† Σιωπή magna καὶ παντὸς ὑψηλοτέρου λόγου. Longin. de sub. sect. 9.

*And all the people, that came together to that sight,
beholding the things which were done, smote their
breasts, and returned*.*

Their sensations were too big for utterance!

The sullen silence of *Ajax* in *Homer* is well known, and deservedly extolled by *Longinus*. I will quote *Virgil's* admirable imitation of it, in *Mr. Pitt's* translation, for the entertainment of the reader: which, however, falls very short of the majesty of the original.

" Nought to these tender words the fair replies,

" But fixt on earth her unrelenting eyes;

" The chief still weeping, with a sullen mien,

" In steadfast silence, frown'd th' obdurate queen.

" Fixt as a rock amidst the roaring main,

" She hears him sigh, implore, and plead in vain.

" Then, where the woods their thickest shades display,

" From his detested sight she shoots away."

Nor will I let go the opportunity of giving a little variety to this work by producing a delightful passage of the same kind from the father of poetry, not noticed by the critics †.

* Ch. xxiii. v. 48.

† Hom. Od. A. 537.

Ως εφ' αμην· ψυχὴ δὲ ποδῶν Αἰακίδαο
Φοῖβα, μακρὰ βίβωσα, καὶ ἀσφοδιλοὶ λειμῶνα,
Γηθοσύνη, ὃ δὲ υἱὸν εἶπεν ἀριδικίῳ εἶναι.

Achilles,

Achilles, after some other conversation with *Ulysses* in the *shades*, inquires into the conduct of his son. He received such an account of his bravery and exploits, as could not fail to be highly acceptable to such a father. The effect of this intelligence on *Achilles* is thus nobly imagined by the poet:

“ I spake: *Achilles* straight, without reply,
 “ Stalkt o’er the yellow mead of *Asphodel*
 “ With stride majestic; flush’d with joy to hear
 “ Such glorious feats of his intrepid son.”

REMARK XXXIX.

THE *miracle* of the conversion of *water* into *wine* is related with every symptom of veracity. The easiness of the narrative, and the probability of the several circumstances accompanying the miracle, must be either the result of truth and actual observation, or the atchievement of the most ingenious and subtle impostor, that ever exerted his skill for the deception of mankind. If the latter alternative be the more reasonable supposition, it behoves our adversaries to give some account of this sagacious plagiarist; some little insight into his character—who he was—when and where he existed. Until a few particulars of

this kind can be made out, they must indulge the friends of revelation in their partiality for *the cloud of witnesses*, that encompass them; and in their respect for those innumerable marks of internal probability, discoverable in the scriptures of their religion. Should the *deist* call this attachment to their faith *puerile*, and *irrational*, unworthy of a *philosophical* turn of mind; though decency will not suffer us to oppose the names of many now alive to this groundless and conceited imputation, yet surely, without alledging instances from the *clerical* profession, we may be allowed to cite the names of BACON, MILTON, BOYLE, NEWTON, LOCKE, and HARTLEY. In competition with these heroes of our species, if the dispute must be decided by the preponderancy of *genius* and *accomplishments*, such men as *Hume* * and *Gibbon* are as
the

* I have often been shocked and mortified at the commendations, which Mr. *Hume* has received from respectable writers, on account of his history. Of his other qualities as a historian I say nothing: my present concern is with his stile. In a select company of friends I once asserted, that he was a WRETCHED WRITER. The opinion was not admitted, and his relation of the massacre in *Ireland* was mentioned as a fine specimen of composition. It was immediately produced, and after a slight dissection given up as truly pitiful. This history, and especially Mr. *Gibbon's*, shews the *author* more than the *subject*; and, instead
of

the small dust of the balance against the mountains;—
as the malignant glimmerings of a taper to the effulgence of a mid-day sun.

These self-important gentlemen know nothing in reality of the *evidences of revelation*. It is asserted by Dr. Johnson in Mr. Boswell's Memoirs of him, that Hume owned to a clergyman in the *bishopric of Durham*, that he had never read the *New Testament* in a dispassionate and inquisitive manner. And “upon this occasion, I cannot
“ help calling to mind what once past between
“ the renowned Sir Isaac Newton and the famous
“ Dr. Halley. This latter throwing out some indecent reflexions upon *Christianity*, Sir Isaac
“ stopt him short, and spoke to him in these or the
“ like words: Dr. Halley, I am always glad to
“ hear you, when you speak about *astronomy*, or
“ other parts of *mathematics*; because that is a
“ subject you have studied, and well understand:
“ but you should not talk of *Christianity*, for you
“ have not studied it. I have; and know you
“ know nothing of the matter*.”

of the perspicuity, simplicity, and purity of *narrative*, you are presented with all the pomp of oratorical tumour and laborious ostentation; with every species of vicious affectation and ridiculous verbosity, absolutely insupportable to men of taste, and to such as have been schooled in the natural language and pure composition of ancient history.

* Emlyn's Life, p. 55.

To return to the subject of this *Remark* *. The absence of all contrivance and collusion could not be more happily implied, than by the manner in which the discovery is signified to the company. The servants alone were privy to the process of the miracle; and were desired by *Jesus* to carry some of the new wine to the governor of the feast. According to the usual practice on those occasions, mentioned too by the governor, the wine, which they had been drinking last, was not remarkable for its excellence. His attention was immediately excited by this fresh supply, and he gives his attestation to the miracle in so natural and easy a way, that I cannot but esteem it beyond the reach of artifice and the ingenuity of imposture. He called the bridegroom, and said: *Every man at the beginning setteth forth good wine, and, when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*

This incidental testimony carries with it all the air of authenticity, which could possibly be derived from the unaffected mention of such a circumstance.

I cannot dismiss the *miracle* before us, without calling upon the reader to contemplate the compliant and amiable character of our Lord and the religion which he preacht. *Christianity*, he will observe,

* John ii. 1—12.

does

does not disdain to indulge the innocent enjoyments and temperate recreations of humanity. We have here inculcated nothing of puritanical sourness, nothing of the rigorous austerities of *Stoicism*. It enjoins no *fastings*, no painful *mortifications* of the flesh. Its spirit is in unison with the unadulterated affections of our constitution. The author of *nature* and the giver of *grace* is one and the same, God unchangeable and everlasting.

REMARK XL.

THE expulsion of *the buyers and sellers* from the temple is such an extraordinary transaction in itself, and so very different from the customary conduct of our Saviour, that an impostor of any penetration and address (and surely prejudice itself will not deny a forger of the gospels *some* portion of these qualities) would have thought it madness to leave *such* an account, unaccompanied by any allegations to vindicate the behaviour of *Jesus*, and any reasons for the implicit deference of the *traders* to his authority. No: we have undoubtedly the authentic narrative of a historian, conscious that he was employed upon the truth, and no farther solicitous than to record it; con-
fiding

finding in the general tenour of the history at large for consistency and corroboration.

A consciousness in the traders of the indecency and profanation of their proceedings, in prostituting the courts of the Lord's house to the accommodation of their worldly purposes in so degrading a manner, would not, I think, in itself account for this ready acquiescence in our Lord's conduct. And yet daily experience is sufficient to certify the advantage, which this principle of nature can give the weak over the strong. But, if we connect with this an idea of his *miraculous* power, (without which indeed the cooperating cause, that is, the great multitude of applauding spectators, who accompanied him, cannot easily be accounted for) all difficulties will be removed; a beautiful coherence is discovered, and the attestation of a singular event, will accede to the *divine legation*, as well as the *prophetic* character *, of our Saviour. The whole transaction appears to me most mysterious and perfectly unaccountable in any other view; but plain, and reasonable, and consistent, and satisfactory in this.

* See BISHOP HURD's most excellent Discourse on this subject in his Sermons.

Now

Now the unanimity of *all* the *Evangelists* in recording this piece of history is a sufficient proof of *their* opinion of it's importance; and this constitutes a presumption of the justness of the preceding ideas respecting it, which certainly give it this importance.

I discover another mark of simplicity and truth, another presumption against all collusive management, in the different relations, which the *Evangelists* have left of this transaction; and of such force, as, I flatter myself, cannot be resisted.

When our Saviour declares in the narratives of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*: *My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it A DEN OF THIEVES**; an allusion is not intended to a nest of robbers indiscriminately, of *any* description, but is particular and precise. A comparison is not instituted between the *traders* and a band of robbers; but between a *den* of robbers and the *Court of the Temple*. By a *den* is here meant the *cavity of a rock*, a *subterraneous habitation*, or some such place, where robbers were accustomed to secrete the CATTLE, which they had stolen. I cannot better illustrate my meaning and the pertinency of the appellation, than by producing a passage from *Virgil*, immediately to the purpose,

* Matt. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46.

in which the *cave* and *rapine* of *Cacus* is described*.

"Alcides came, and here his spacious herds

"Spread o'er the valley and the river's bank.

"On wiles and mischief Cacus still intent,

"Four beauteous HEIFERS and four stately BULLS

"By fraud drives off; and, that no steps direct

"Might indicate their course, he backward drags

"His struggling plunder to his GLOOMY DEN."

Now I maintain, that the phrase *a den of thieves* is perfectly unintelligible as it is related by these *three* Evangelists, because there is nothing in the context, that can lead to an explanation of it. We must have recourse to St. *John's* relation for satisfaction upon this point; which is this:

* Æn. viii. 203.

Alcides aderat, taurosque hâc victor agebat

Ingentes: vallemque boves amnemque tenebant.

At furiis Caci mens effera, ne quid inausum

Aut intractatum scelerisve dolive fuisset,

Quatuor à stabulis præstanti corpore tauros

Avertit, totidem formâ superante juvenas:

Atque hos, ne qua forent pedibus vestigia rectis,

Caudâ in speluncam tractos, versisque viarum

Indiciis raptos, saxo occultabat opaco.

This just explanation of *a den of thieves*, if I mistake not, is Mr. Markland's: a man of true simplicity of mind, adorned by a sound judgement and exquisite learning.

He

He drove them all out of the temple, and the SHEEP and the OXEN*.

Here is the key to this *den of thieves*, dropped indeed very incidentally, as it should seem, and without design: for it is extremely observable, that our Saviour's charge in this Evangelist is not — *Make not my father's house a DEN OF THIEVES* — but — *Make not my father's house a HOUSE OF MERCHANDIZE*. — So then those historians, who employ the peculiar expression under contemplation, leave it wholly unintelligible in it's proper acceptation; and that historian, on the other hand, who had actually given the *explanation*, does not use the *phrase*. Now I defy any man to imagine a more decisive and unequivocal proof of persons, writing from the simplicity of their hearts, unaccompanied by the slightest symptom of artificial contrivance and collusion, — without the least appearance of any solicitude beyond a plain narration of the truth, — than what a comparison of our *Evangelists* exhibits in this instance. The conclusion is obvious: and the evidence is almost irresistible†.

The reader will discover the propriety of the same inference in favour of the freedom of the

* C. ii. v. 15.

† Sine dubio in omni re vincit imitationem veritas: Cicero de orat. iii. 57.

Evangelists from all partial purposes, if he will take the trouble of comparing Matt. xxvi. 68. with *Mark* xiv. 65. and *Luke* xxii. 64. He will observe that the *first* writer uses the expression, PROPHECY unto us—without mentioning what the other *two* have inserted, and what is necessary to explain the phrase; namely, that the *face* of *Christ* was covered. And this confirms also another *remark*, which I have had occasion to make before; How natural it is for those, fully acquainted with a circumstance, to overlook particulars as if of no importance, but which are in reality essential to convey a proper insight into the transaction to one not already acquainted with it.

To this purpose also is *John* ii. 19. with Matt. xxvi. 61. The particular there specified has no *application* in the former *Evangelist*, and no previous mention in the latter. There cannot be, in my opinion, more probable indications of honest and disinterested purpose.

REMARK _XLI.

If a lover of the gospel should reflect on the cowardly disposition of the *Apostles*, of which they gave such unequivocal proof by forsaking their master in his last extremity, and consulting only their

their own preservation: and should observe, on the other hand, their *forwardness* and *intrepidity* within a *few days after*; it is not improbable, that some emotions of embarrassment and mistrust may arise from a transition apparently too sudden to be conformable to truth and nature upon any assignable operations of the human mind.—The *Apostles* were indeed destitute of all the customary incentives to great and hazardous undertakings: ineloquent, unexercised in public life, without friends, without influence*. How then is this extraordinary conduct to be explained? I reply: a PERSUASION OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST, upon the evidence of their SENSES, was an adequate cause for so great an alteration of conduct and such intrepidity of temper: and furnishes a complete solution of the problem. When I contemplate every circumstance of their situation, I feel convinced, that no ingenuity can devise another countervailing principle equal to such effects. To take refuge in *supernatural influence*, when so reasonable and satisfactory a cause can be assigned of sufficient efficacy, is both unphilosophical and injurious to *Christianity*. THIS, I maintain, was that ADVOCATE, who would defend these uneloquent and unlearned

* See Arist. Rhet. i. 22.

Galileans with such strength of argument, such energy of conviction, before *rulers, and kings, and councils**:—THIS was that *mouth and wisdom*, which all the power, and policy, and malice of their *adversaries* would be unable to gainsay and resist†. Observe the ground upon which *Peter and John* build their determined resolution to preach the gospel in spite of every impediment. *We cannot, say they, but speak the things, which we have SEEN and HEARD*‡.

Upon this plain and obvious principle, that promise in *John xiv. 26.* admits a most satisfactory explanation. *But the holy spirit, that advocate, which the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things; and will remind you of all that I said unto you: that is, (if I have been able to acquire any insight into the phraseology of the scriptures) “That extraordinary energy of the* “*holy spirit of God*§, *my resurrection from the* “*grave, which is to be the subject of your preach-* “*ing, will be, from your certain conviction of*

* *Mark xiii. 9.*

† *Luke xxi. 15.*

My learned friend *Dr. Edwards*, of *Cambridge*, has, in my opinion, entirely misconceived this point in his sermon before the *University*, on the *Predictions of the Apostles concerning the End of the World*, page 7.

‡ *Acts. iv. 20.*

§ *Rom. i. 4.*

“ it,

“ it, your defence and encouragement, and will
 “ shew you the importance of my *death*; a fact,
 “ of which I, for this reason, so repeatedly fore-
 “ warned you*, and which ye were so backward
 “ to apprehend.” Compare also *John* ii. 22.
 xii. 16. as strongly illustrative of these ideas.

The foregoing *remarks* will appear to the competent and dispassionate examiner, if I mistake not, of considerable moment, and calculated to remove much difficulty from the *scriptures*; for we cannot discover from the subsequent conduct of the *apostles*, as delivered in the *second* history by *St. Luke*, that they spoke or reasoned with *more sagacity* after the death of *Christ* than before, or in a manner at all superior to that of common men. The single *fact* alone of their master's *resurrection* inspired them at once with *argument* and *fortitude*. What they had seen, they taught. It was not *they*, who *spoke*; but this miracle of the *holy spirit* of their father, which *spoke* in them†.

And this constitutes, we know, the *ESSENTIAL DISTINCTION* between the testimony of the *apostles*, and the case of those, who have laid down their lives for the truth in *other* instances,

* *Matt.* xvi. 21. xx. 18. *John* ii. 19.

† *Matt.* x. 19, 20.

and in the succeeding ages of *Christianity*. On one side, martyrdom was the result of a particular persuasion, according to the different sentiments of the individual, derived from the written records of the gospel, respecting transactions unknown to him through any other medium; liable, therefore, to endless diversity, and consequently to endless error and misconception. On the other side, martyrdom attended a conviction of what had been HEARD and SEEN, and HANDLED of the word of life*: in which case there was, of course, no POSSIBILITY of misapprehension and mistake. We have, in one instance, if I may be allowed this technical illustration of my meaning, the exemplification of an axiom: in the other, no more than a theoretical demonstration of sincerity†.

* 1 John i. 1.

† I would recommend to the reader some judicious reasonings of *Eusebius*, *Dem. evang.* iii. 6. p. 137. et seq. which are rather too copious for insertion in this place, at a time when publications of this nature are so precarious in their issue and so certain and exorbitant in their cost. He may consult also to great advantage *Origen* against *Celsus*, lib. ii. p. 65. ed. Cant. 1658.

REMARK

REMARK XLII.

THE *miracles* both of the *Old and New Testament*, if they imply nothing absurd and contradictory in themselves, nothing inconsistent with our most approved conceptions of the Supreme Being and the wisdom of the divine administration; the *miracles*, I say, of revelation, in these circumstances, proclaim their own *authenticity*, upon this plain principle;—that NO MAN, conversant only with the occurrences of common life, could have *originally** entertained notions so unauthorised by experience, and utterly incapable of admission into the mind, without the interference of some extraneous impression, without the existence of the *reality*. Nay, we may express this proposition in still stronger terms:—The very SINGULARITY of the subject is, in this,

* Αλογοι γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ εἶδη ἡγεῖσθαι βλαβάνη, καὶ ἀδύνατοι· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὀνόματα φύσις νομοθετήματα εἰσι, τὰ δὲ εἶδη, ἢ νομοθετήματα, ἀλλὰ βλαβήματα. *Hippocrates* περὶ τῆς τέχνης.

Nunquàm corpus umbra, aut veritatem imago præcedit :

Tertul. Apol. 47.

Ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ γινώσκειν πάντα τὰ λεγόμενα. Εἰ γὰρ ὄνομα μόνον ἐγινώσκτο, λόγος δὲ (ἰ. ἢ) περὶ αὐτῶν εἶδος ὑπερξέν· ἀλλὰ προτιτερον τὰ ἔργα, καθ' ὅτως ὁ λόγος ὁ περὶ αὐτῶν. *Palæphatus* init. which is exactly correspondent to my own ideas.

and all such cases, a HIGH PRESUMPTION of the TRUTH of the transaction*.

Herodotus informs us†, that “*Necho*, king of
“*Egypt*, sent some *Phoenicians* on a naval expe-
“dition with orders to sail through the pillars of
“*Hercules* into the *Northern* sea, and so return
“to *Egypt*. The *Phoenicians* accordingly set sail
“from the *Red Sea* towards the *South*. In au-
“tumn they went on shore, sowed their seed,
“waited for the return of harvest, and then pro-
“ceeded on their voyage. Thus they went on
“for two successive years : and on the third year
“doubled the pillars of *Hercules*, and came to
“*Egypt*. They brought back a strange account,
“perfectly INCREDIBLE TO ME ; another may
“believe it, if he pleases ; that, when they sailed
“round *Libya*, THEY HAD THE SUN ON THEIR
“RIGHT HAND‡.” The same honest author, sect.

25.

* To the same purpose *Aristotle* : *Rhet.* ii. 19. 2 fin.
ΑΛΛΟ, ΕΝ ΤΩΝ ΔΟΚΕΙΤΩΝ ΜΕΝ ΓΙΝΗΣΘΑΙ, ΑΠΙΣΤΩΝ ΔΕ· ΟΤΙ Ή ΑΝ ΙΔΟΞΑΝ,
Η ΜΗ ΗΥ.

† *L.* iv. sect. 42. Which I suppose is the earliest ac-
count upon record of the doubling of the *Cape of Good*
Hope, about six hundred years before the *Christian æra*.

‡ A similar assertion proves the account of *Nearchus* in
Arrian to be true, *hist. Ind.* sect. 25. ed. *Gronov.* “As
“they sailed by the land of the *Indians*, *Nearchus* says that
“the

"25. will not believe "that men with goat's-feet
 "inhabit the northern extremities of Europe; and
 "that others near them sleep for six months."—The
 latter fictions arose from men in those high lati-
 tudes having been seen in *beasts-skins*, and so
 compared to *satyrs*; and from the actual expe-
 rience in travellers of the *length of the day* in
summer.

It is evident to a demonstration, that these
Phoenicians did actually perform this expedition;
 that they past the *tropic of cancer*, and possibly
 the *line* and the *southern tropic*. But such a
 strange idea of going *beyond the sun*, which, we
 see, gained no credit with our grave historian;
 such an idea, I say, as this could not possibly be
 a mere fiction of the sailors, an *effect* without a
*cause**;—it could originate in no other source but
actual experiment and *ocular observation*.

Let us illustrate these important positions by an
 example or two. I have but little doubt in my
 own mind concerning the truth of the following

"the shadows were different; but, when they had ad-
 vanced considerably to the south, the shadows also were
 "turned to the south:" and other facts, all demonstrating,
 that he had actually been between the tropics.

* Λογὸν γὰρ ἔργου σκῆν, κατὰ Δημοκρίτου: for words are the
 shadow of actions, says Democritus. Plutarch.

remarkable event*. It is impressed with strong characters of authenticity, and is easily reconciled to credibility and redeemed from extravagance by one or two very reasonable *postulata*.

“ Two friends, *Arcadians*, were travelling together ; and, when they arrived at *Megara*, one took up his lodgings at an inn, the other with a friend. In the night, the one, who lodged with his friend, fancied that he at the inn entertained him to come to his assistance, as the inn-keeper was preparing to murder him. Immediately he rose up from sleep in a fright ; but, on recollection, thinking the vision unworthy of notice, he laid himself down again. His friend seemed in a second appearance to beg him not to leave his death unrevenged, as he had foreborn to assist him whilst alive ; adding, that he had been murdered, thrown into a cart by the inn-keeper, and covered with dung : he wisht him therefore to watch the cart as it went out of the gate in the morning. He went accordingly, and askt the driver what he had got in his cart ; who ran away terrified at the question. The body was found at the bottom, and the inn-keeper capitally punished.”

The fact I judge to have been as follows : The survivor, either from the bad polity of the coun-

* *Cicero de divin.* i. 27. and taken from him by *Valerius Maximus*, i. 7. fin.

try, the character or look of the inn-keeper, or some other unknown appearances productive of suspicion, was apprehensive for the safety of his friend at the inn. Full of these apprehensions, he went to sleep, and dreamt, as was natural, that his companion was murdered. On going to the inn in the morning; and, meeting with some unsatisfactory excuse, his suspicion led him to have the cart examined, and thus the murder was detected.—The additional circumstances are probably adventitious to the true relation, in consequence of passing through various hands, and a prevalent disposition in mankind to enlarge and aggravate remarkable occurrences.

Of this kind is that remarkable *phænomenon*, related by *three* evangelists, the *transfiguration* of *Jesus* upon the Mount: which the *deist*, perhaps, like the *prudent* historian, will not choose to credit; though, like him also, he may believe a multitude of other strange things, against *all* reason and probability. As philosophy and experience have vindicated the character of the *Phœnician* sailors against the insinuations of their journalist; so we are convinced, that sound reason and probable deduction will bear us out in our belief of the *miracles* of scripture against the objections of our ablest and most insidious opponents.

The general pretension of antiquity to *miracles* and the unanimous persuasion of their *reality* in all ages and amongst all nations, prove decidedly, in my opinion, *some* miracles to be *true*. Let then the *deist* point out those from the great mass on record, which can establish so fair a claim to the character of authenticity, as those connected with the *Jewish* and *Christian* revelations.

The present existing condition of *Judaism*, *Christianity*, and *Mahometanism*, (which is founded on the *two* former revelations and proceeds on a supposition of their authenticity, or it would never have gained converts, sensual as it is) appears to me a demonstration of *miracles* exhibited at some former period, and not otherwise to be accounted for from any known principles of human action. *Large bodies* of men neither originally accept, nor long retain, a system of religious institutions, which restrains the unruliness of passion and carnal indulgences, accompanied also by a multiplicity of temporal disabilities and embarrassments, without some miraculous attestation to the character of the founder*. History is uniform in

* *Sedulius*, pasch. carm. i. a poet of much elegance :

Indicio est ANTICUA FIDES, et cana PRIORUM
TESTIS OBIGO PATRUM ; nullisque abolenda per ævum
Temporibus constant virtutum signa tuarum.

her

her testimony to this effect*. But *Jews* and *Christians* have adhered to their respective systems through a series of *ages*, environed by difficulties and assailed by temptations; nor have they shewn themselves more tenacious under the gloom of ignorance, than in the sunshine of letters and refinement†: they have remained steadfast, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, rustics and philosophers. Their respective institutions,

* *Omnium primum, rem ad multitudinem imperitam, et illis sæculis rudem, efficacissimam Deorum, metum injiciendum ratus est: qui, quum DESCENDERE AD ANIMOS SINE ALIQUO COMMENTO MIRACULI NON POSSET, simulat sibi cum deâ Egeriâ congressus nocturnos esse. Liv. i. 19.* which is applicable also to other founders of a religious polity.

† Compare this statement of a most observable and consoling fact with the case of the *Church of England*, and other such *human contrivances* and engines of *state-policy*: and see whether *they* gain, like the gospel, more *fervent* patrons and admirers in proportion to the discussion of their principles by inquisitive and learned men; notwithstanding the potent attraction of the *golden bait*. Beyond all dispute, if these *establishments* are true, the best argument for the genuineness of *Christianity* is effectually gone; and I wish some charitable *dignitary* would take pity on us and our religion, and supply an equivalent evidence in it's place. *DEANS and BISHOPS, encrease our faith!*

therefore,

therefore, at their origin, must have been established on *miracles**.

Indeed every day, that passes by, teems with *miracles*. All, that our eyes behold,—all the shifting scene before us, is a *mass* and *series* of *miracles*. And what shall prevent the Supreme Being from *diversifying* his plans and *adorning* his arrangement with additional interference, for specific and important ends? Is it not the same *omnipotence*, that operates, whether by *continuity* of influence, or occasional *accession*? The *evidence* alone is the proper object of our discussion: for who shall dictate the measures of procedure to CONSUMMATE WISDOM? or how shall *man* undertake to decide on the expediency of the *means*, or the *original* motives, of *providential administration*†?

* 2 Pet. i. 16.

Hear then, quoth he, the tenor of my tale,

In sort as I it to that shepheard told:

NO LEASING NEW, nor grandame's FABLE STALE,

But ANCIENT TRUTH, confirm'd with CREDEnce OLD.

Spencer's Colin Clout.

† Neque enim, quia se divina mortalibus dedignantur fateri, idcirco, quæ visa non fuerint, dubitabimus facta, quum facta videamus, quæ dubitaverimus esse facienda. *Pacati panegyricus* Theod. Aug. sect. 39.

REMARK

REMARK XLIII.

BUT the whole *New Testament* does not record a more extraordinary fact, than that, which *St. John* declares to have been exhibited under his own inspection.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw, that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierc'd his side, and forthwith came thereout BLOOD AND WATER. And he who saw it, beareth record; and his record is true.*

Dr. Hunter's preliminary dissertation to his anatomical lectures sufficiently shews the very imperfect knowledge of anatomy, that obtained in ages long posterior to the days of *Christ*. And, in any case, our unlettered fisherman, of an occupation, as ancient history abundantly shews, reputed the most vile and wretched, will not easily be suspected of an acquaintance with this subject more accurate and extensive than that of his contemporaries, eminent for their attainments in learning and in science. The argument in this view is very cogent. Nor can it be thought, that an impostor would hazard an assertion respecting consequences, which, could it be supposed to enter his mind at all, greater experience and maturer

* C, xix, V, 33—36,

information might evince to be absurd, or even impossible. Stronger evidence, as it appears to me, cannot be desired in a case like this. The reality of the fact seems unquestionable. It will stand to the end of time an irrefragable demonstration of *John's* veracity, and of the authority of his *gospel*.

Now this effect here described, the flowing out of *blood and water*, is an indubitable proof, that *Jesus* was ACTUALLY DEAD; and, therefore, that he could not shew himself *alive* to his disciples afterwards but by a *resurrection* from the grave: which event is the foundation, as I have before observed, that supports the whole fabric of the *Christian* revelation. This appearance, I say, was a *proof of death*. The *water*, mentioned by our evangelist, was the *lymphatic fluid* from the *pericardium** and the intermediate parts, added probably to a defluxion from the *mucous glands* of the *lungs*; all which could not fail of being considerably lacerated by the passage of such a weapon, as a *Roman* spear. Had any life still remained in our Saviour's body, and the circulation of the blood not yet ceased; so great an effusion, I presume, must have taken place, as to prevent all discrimination of the *lymph* and similar fluids,

* See *Hippocrates* de corde, init.

that

that issued with it. The transaction is wonderfully striking in every view, and replete with evidence and conviction.

Under this *Remark* I shall take an opportunity of explaining from this text a most remarkable passage in the *epistles* of the same author, upon which I presume the reader would have recourse in vain for satisfaction to any commentator, and which receives immediate illustration and certainty from the preceding observations.

The passage here meant is, *John v. 8.* and should be thus translated :

And there are three, which bear witness on the earth, the BREATH, and the WATER, and the BLOOD: and the end of these three is one.

The circumstance, which is proved by these three things in conjunction—the *breath*—the *water*—and the *blood*—is THE DEATH OF CHRIST. Our evangelist had said*, *that Jesus gave up his BREATH.* But we all know, that life is recoverable in many instances after *respiration* ceases. The *breath* alone, therefore, would not bear effectual witness. But the concurrence of the *water* and the *blood*, issuing from the perforation of the spear, makes the testimony quite complete, and constitutes an undeniable demonstration of the cessation of existence.

* John xix. 30.

I might subjoin also the testimonies, which *Jews* have borne at different times to the life and character of *Jesus* and his *apostles*, in vindication of the truth of our religion; but as nothing new and important has occurred on this point from my own researches, I shall content myself with referring to some important *remarks* to this effect scattered up and down the works of *Lightfoot*, and to the note in *Bishop Lowth's Isaiah* c. liii. v. 8.

Some may be inclined to think, that I have dwelt upon too many particulars, and not *all* the most important. But it is well known, that what appears of no weight to one man, is convincing to another; and stubborn persuasions are not easily overpowered, but by a circumstantial and copious detail of evidence*. Such as this execution of a good intention may be, I resign it to the candour of the learned and intelligent, who alone are competent to decide.

With a most exquisite observation of our Lord himself I shall close these *Remarks* respecting the *internal Evidences* of the *Christian Revelation*.

* According to a just remark of *Hippocrates*: Ασχυρὸν ἐστὶ πρὸς τὰ ἰσχυρὰ δακνόντα, τὰ πολλὰ ἱστορεῖα επαγισθαι, εἰ μᾶλλον τοῦ ἀκούειν ἐκ τῆς πρὶν γυνμῆς μεταγραφῆαι, τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς λόγοις πείσσειν. p. 514.

But

But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, BECAUSE THEY KNOW NOT HIM THAT SENT ME.*

In other words, IGNORANCE and VICE are the GRAND ENEMIES OF REVELATION. Just sentiments of the SUPREME BEING and a *rational system of natural religion*, operating in purity and integrity of life, contrary to all fallacious systems, will, I think, invariably conduct an ingenuous inquirer to *Christianity*; that truly moral dispensation of faith and practice, which continues to gain an accession of evidence from the researches and disquisitions of its votaries, in proportion to the *improvements of philosophy* and the *advancement of the human understanding*. Whether there can be such a person as a *virtuous and conscientious deist* of competent literature†, who has examined with a dispassionate attention *all* the evidences of the gospel, is a question, to which I should not hesitate to give an answer from the text just quoted, upon the authority of JESUS CHRIST.

* John xv. 21.

† Τὸτο δ', εἰ μὴ τῇ ἀγαθῇ, ὃ φαίνεται· διαγρῆφει γὰρ ἡ μοχθηρία, καὶ διαψευδισθαι ποιεῖ περὶ τὰς πρακτικὰς ἀρχὰς· ὥς φαίνεται, ὅτι ἀδυνάτου φρονιμον εἶναι, μὴ ὅσα πρᾶξαι. Arist. eth. Nic. vii. 12.

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